DESTROY ALL MOVIES!!!

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO PUNKS ON FILM

EDITED BY ZACK CARLSON & BRYAN CONNOLLY FOREWORD BY RICHARD HELL

NO RULES!

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PUNKS ON FILM

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EDITED BY ZACK CARLSON
AND BRYAN CONNOLLY

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

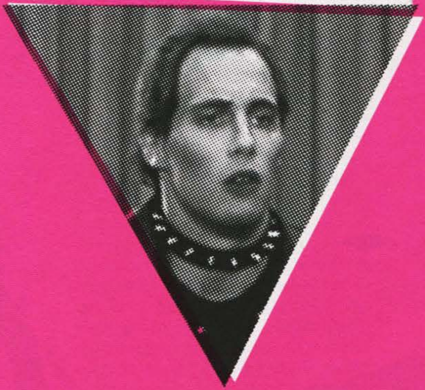
DESIGN BY JACOB COVEY

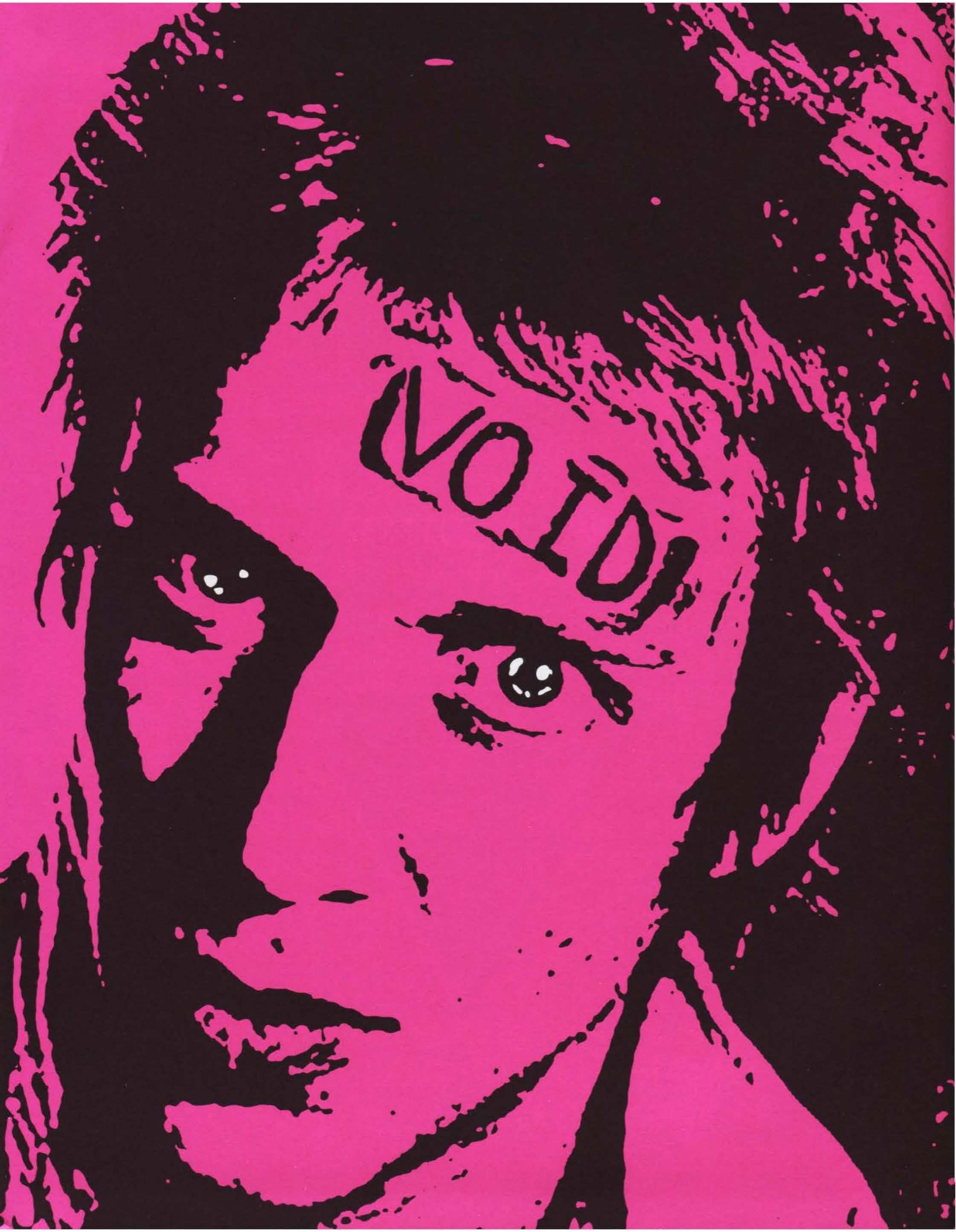
THANK YOU KEVIN SHANNON AND THE STAFF OF SCARECROW VIDEO, SEATTLE, WA JOE SHIVERS AND THE STAFF OF VULCAN VIDEO, AUSTIN, TX JANET CUNNINGHAM TIM & KARRIE LEAGUE OF THE ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE CINEMA, AUSTIN, TX BRANDON BAY AND CLONE PRESS DANIEL KERR MICAH PRUDE ESTHER PEARL WATSON AND MARK TODD BLAKE ETHRIDGE THE GRAND ILLUSION CINEMA, SEATTLE, WA THE CINEFAMILY, LOS ANGELES, CA THE NEW BEVERLY CINEMA, LOS ANGELES, CA I LUV VIDEO, AUSTIN, TX RAIN CITY VIDEO, SEATTLE, WA VIDEO VERTIGO (R.I.P.), SEATTLE, WA BIG DADDY'S VIDEO (R.I.P.), CHEHALIS, WA PIC-A-FLIC VIDEO (R.I.P.), GALLUP, NM ALL MOM 'N' POP VIDEO STORES ACROSS THE WORLD…STAY STRONG DANNY BLAND DORMARTH AND HIS HOUSE OF HORROR DAVID WINGO LARS NILSEN MICHAEL, LINDSAY & SOPHIE STEPHENSON MARK HARTLEY JESSE FICKS OF MIDNITES FOR MANIACS, SAN FRANCISCO, CA PHIL BLANKENSHIP & JACKIE GREED IVAN PEYCHEFF JUDD TAYLOR JOSH KUPECKI BRIAN QUINN JANE CANTILLON ADAM SHEA SEAN SAVAGE ORCA BOOKS, OLYMPIA, WA BOB & BETH CONNOLLY STEVE & SANDY CARLSON BONNIE & HAL CARLSON JUSTIN ISHMAEL CLAUDIA HOLLERN JON HEWITT … AND JASON MILES, GARY GROTH, ERIC REYNOLDS AND EVERYONE AT FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS.

To

PENELOPE SPHEERIS
and JON GRIES

for inspiring this project
and countless others.




(VOID)

FOREWORD by RICHARD HELL

WHAT I HOPE IS THAT I'M CATCHING YOU GLANCING THROUGH THIS BOOK, WONDERING WHETHER OR NOT TO BUY IT. BUY IT!

This is one of those gems of immaculate editorial conception, perfectly executed, that will probably not stay in print for long. Like Jesus. The world is really not worthy of this book, and if you don't buy it now, you will regret it later when it's a lot more expensive.

Destroy All Movies!!! belongs to a certain great and rare category of anthology: those that are works of art themselves, rather than mere compilations. Two other examples immediately come to mind: Eric Karpeles's inspired volume reproducing all the paintings that are mentioned by Proust in the 3000+ pages of *In Search of Lost Time*; and the book Nabokov planned, but didn't have time to complete, which was to be a compilation of paintings throughout history that include butterflies. Could *DAM* match those two projects in its potential for providing beauty, intellectual stimulation, and information about the world? Yes! What we mostly discover when we look at the movies in this book is that the world is a really stupid place, almost unbearably stupid — but a lot of fun to read about.

Along with seeing the stupidity of the world, I learned from this book that "punk," and its signs, its language (clothes, haircuts, music, etc.), tends to stand for two things in the culture. First, it stands for the possibility of pride and haven for kids who are rejected as worthless by almost everyone else. Penelope Spheeris's *Suburbia* is probably the strongest illustration of this. The other thing punk stands for is an unhinged, violent, criminal threat to all of society and every decent person. Mark Lester's *Class of 1984* exemplifies that. Most of the movies in this book incoherently mix these two messages. Or possibly the movies have it right. They're two messy sides of the same coin: the kids get pride and self-respect by exposing society's hypocrisy and underlying ugliness, which makes them dangerous. Consider young Lung Leg in the magnificent R. Kern flick which is named for the words she spits as she fatally shoots her insufferably smug, snide parents, "*You killed me first!*"

It was interesting to see how superficial and generic 99% of the movies in this book are. Most of the movies that include punk were either formula genre movies — such as horror or, of course, youthsploitation — or else uptight Hollywood flicks in which "punk" was code for lowlife. This was the view of punk made by outsiders who were exploiting it because their aim was to make a profit from the general population. The exceptions to the superficial stereotypes are usually in the documentaries, doubtless because they can be made cheaply enough to succeed with only the subculture itself for an audience.

Anyway, the real core of this book is its concept and the editors' relish and aptitude in describing the hundreds and hundreds of movies they found that contain a shot of a decked-out reject kid. The book is senseless and fantastically entertaining, exactly the qualities the editors love in the movies they write about. It's really the most healthy, or, to put it another way, sick, response to have to the world.

"YOU THINK THIS IS A FUCKIN' COSTUME? THIS IS A WAY OF LIFE."

The dates and locations of punk's origins are well-traveled topics better left to arguments between lonely men in used record stores. Many consider punk a lifestyle that reflects the spirit of angry rebellion, a distrust of authority and the drive to create despite limited means. Concepts like these were nothing new but, in the mid-'70s, this mindset was given a name.

Punk and its followers ambushed the world with nuclear force. It was an unprecedented phenomenon that infested radio, print and culture as a whole. Of all its shell-shocked witnesses, the least prepared was Hollywood, who mistook the movement for a walking epidemic of self-abusive, garbage-eating, candy-colored manimals ripe for marketable stereotyping. When the entertainment industry sunk its hooks into this concept, punk's relevance threw a rod and spiraled into a nosedive. This would've been a complete loss...if not for the results.

Suddenly, yesterday's hippie and biker caricatures were thrust aside to make room for a *new* generation of brain-dead semi-humans. Jiggly beach comedies and rubber-suited sci-fi epics were under attack by a jarring new style of character, the latest model more cartoonishly exploitable than anything in history. For a business built on appearances, the dizzying combination of leather-caveman rage and neon future chic was just too hard to resist. New wave gaudiness was a uniquely efficient path to cheap laffs and readymade rebellion: the higher the haircut, the punker the punk. It wasn't long before movies and TV had taken a major chapter in social history and boiled it down to something like this:

> DAUGHTER: Mom, dad, I'd like you to meet my new boyfriend...Dog-Ass.
>
> [Dog-Ass smashes a bottle against his mohawked skull, punches Mom in the face and turns to the camera.]
>
> DOG-ASS: No rules!!!!

But the pendulum swung back hard. Just as punk's purity had been compromised by a scourge of goonbag misrepresentations, cinema was altered in the shadows of day-glo hair crimes and steel-spiked wardrobes. The new "trend"—though still massively misunderstood—had become deeply established through its incessant, inaccurate presence in the public eye. The shift was tangible, as teens across the world quickly absorbed and adopted every available version of individuality on display. Reactionary news reports and concerned parent groups only fed the fire. Whatever this thing was, it wasn't going away.

Meanwhile, punk participants like Penelope Spheeris and Alex Cox had managed to capture the outbreak in a humanistic light, creating enduring visions of a new breed of youth through blazing documentaries and narrative assaults. A handful of creators recognized it as an unprecedented movement, still in its early phases and already verging on a permanent cultural faction. Their films regarded punk with respect...or at least no less respect than they showed to everything else. Even an *attempt* at an accurate depiction was revolutionary. People in and outside the scene responded with enthusiasm, creating a place for the non-exaggerated punk as well.

Time passed, kids aged and other revolutions took the forefront. In the '90s, punk rock re-exploded, flatlined and died rich. But documentation survived: flawed evidence that something massive had shaken the world in the second half of the 20th century. For better or worse, punk and its parodies had been immortalized in film.

"THIS IS A *BAAAD* IDEA..."

In winter of 2004, I was working at The Grand Illusion Cinema, Seattle's longest running (and tiniest) independent movie house. After much searching, we'd located the only known 35mm film print of 1984's *Suburbia*, a drama about the lives of LA's homeless punk teens. The show took place at midnight during an ice storm. A modest audience filed in and the lights went down.

Over the course of the screening, I realized two things:

1) This was a genuinely sympathetic portrayal of an overlooked section of society.

2) It was the best movie I'd ever seen.

This wasn't the first time I'd watched it; the tape was a battered staple of video stores throughout my high school years, and many of the kids I grew up with could recite long stretches of the script. But while experiencing it on screen with a group of people that had braved the elements to be there, I realized how *important* the movie was. Writer/director Penelope Spheeris presented marginalized youths without pandering to the public's perception of them. The non-actors exhibited a legitimate sadness, and the family these characters created felt more functional than most actual families I knew.

I locked up the theater, went home and watched my own beat-up *Suburbia* VHS tape the following afternoon.

Two weeks later, The Grand Illusion ran spazzoid masterpiece *Joysticks*. My best friend Bryan Connolly drove an hour for the screening despite the fact that neither of us had seen the film before. We grabbed our seats in anticipation of some high-grade, lowbrow '80s arcade hijinks. The movie was all we had hoped for, but suddenly rocketed to the stratosphere with the appearance of one man: Jon Gries as "King Vidiot." This rampaging subhuman lunatic burst into the film with a rabid intensity that can't be described, his pink and blue hair blazing across the screen as he shrieked his every line. Band pins shone off his leather jacket and braces hung from his plaid pants. At his side was a new wave army of female Vidiot disciples, emitting Pac-Man noises as they skittered in tandem robotic shuffles.

We were mesmerized. Characters like this had been an unstoppable force in '80s cinema, and here was the most severe example of the form. Throughout the rest of the movie, King Vidiot sporadically reappeared to chew up the scene and vanish. The other actors looked shocked by Gries' performance, barely able to swap dialogue with him without rearing back in confused terror.

When *Joysticks* ended, half the audience (about seven people) stayed behind to discuss what they'd just seen. It was decided that King Vidiot embodied the anti-intellectual excitement that defined the era's party comedies. He was a walking definition of what made movies *fun*. Just as impressively, he was a hilariously inaccurate effigy of punk, highlighted and accessorized beyond recognition. This was no longer a man; this was a deeply entertaining, beautifully executed error.

Suburbia and *Joysticks* were made in the same year in the same city for the same age demographic. Both films even tackled similar subjects: youths vs. adults, triumph over adversity and maligned punks. But where one movie compellingly showcases the latter as struggling victims, the other presents them as painted berserkers who'd piledrive their grandma for a hot dog. Either way, the viewer wins.

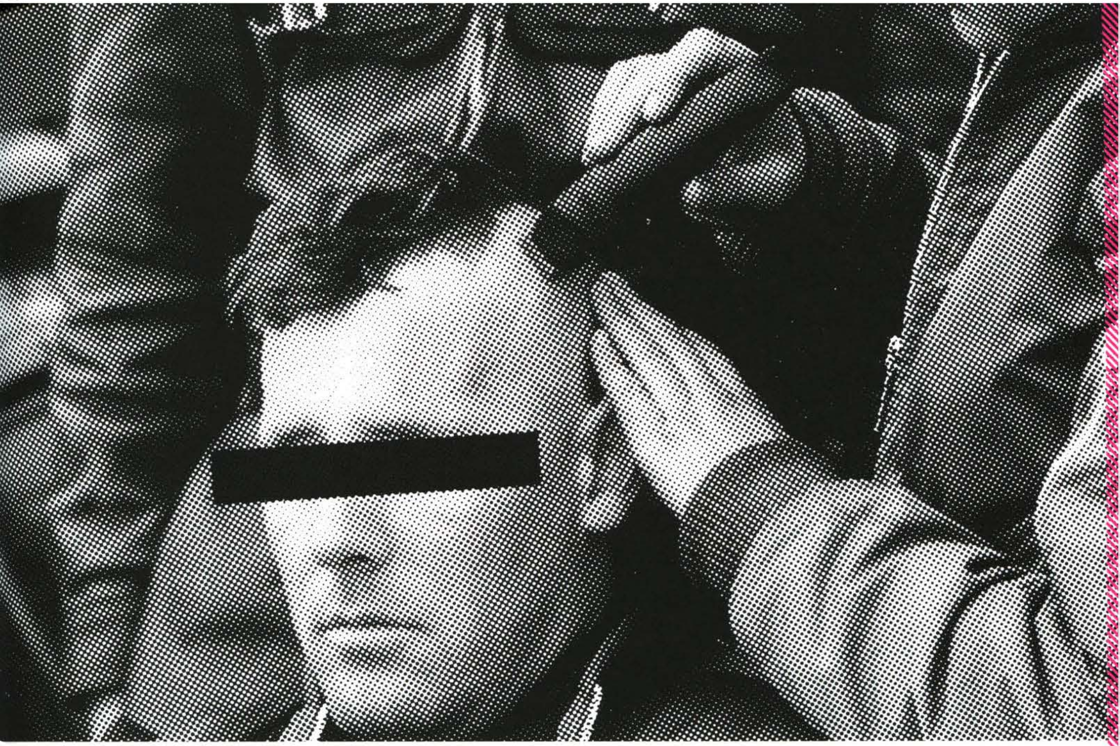
Bryan and I started swapping hazily remembered movie punk moments from our childhoods. The list expanded indefinitely, from comedies (*Howard the Duck*) to action films (*The Terminator*) to full-scale rebellion fantasies (*Rock 'n' Roll High School*). Soon our list had grown past 50 titles and we were in a fever. These characters had burned themselves into our minds and lay dormant for years, just to erupt in a frenzied volley of nostalgia.

Then it happened. "We should write a book about every movie that ever had a punk in it!"

How hard could it be? We'd come up with a good number off the top of our heads, and there couldn't possibly be all *that* many more...could there?

Our plan was simple: go to the local video store, note likely titles and take home the first few for viewing. Fortunately, that store was Scarecrow Video, an independently owned landmark that's the largest video provider in America (possibly the world), boasting almost 100,000 feature films from across the globe.

We showed up as they opened, clutching spiral notebooks. Bryan broke off for the comedy room and I headed for horror.



We both started at "A," pulling each tape from the wall and examining it for any signs of punk/new wave likelihood. Next we started at opposite ends of the action section, meeting at the middle with a tired sigh. Ten hours and no meals later, Scarecrow closed and we retreated.

Fixation had taken hold. The next morning, we were back before they unlocked the doors. We scanned thousands of display boxes in drama, sci-fi and the store's colossal directors section. Previously unconsidered areas were ransacked: instructional, stage adaptations, even France. Our notebooks filled with countless scrawled titles of every movie that could conceivably take place in a major city, a high school or a prison.

By the end of the second assault, we'd manhandled every single movie in the store that wasn't an opera or a Western (though we'd discover a punk in one of those later). Our fingers were black with VHS dust and our tattered pages were overflowing. Bryan had caught a cold... probably from the goddamn kids section. We returned home and laid out our papers, staring at a list of roughly 2000 movies.

At this point, less courageous—or more intelligent—men would have looked at the road ahead and turned away. We forged on.

The following weekend, he returned to Scarecrow for anything we might have missed, while I swept other stores for additional titles. Bryan began online research, at first via the Internet Movie Database, and then through any site that mentioned "punk" and "movie" on the same page. Several of the titles we unearthed were seemingly unavailable anywhere, while others could only be ordered as expensive, undecipherable foreign bootlegs. We scavenged small-town rental stores for forgotten gems while sadly watching the Video Age breathe its last. Meanwhile, the Maybe List grew beyond anything we'd imagined. We divided it up and got to work.

Scarecrow Video was an invaluable resource, allowing us full run of their stock at no charge. On dozens of occasions, Bryan and I would leave with several garbage bags full of tapes slung over our shoulders like two VHS-obsessed Santas. When not at work, we'd spend full days sifting through unwatchable garbage in the hopes of spotting a hint of colored hair or a combat boot. During a party or street scene, the film would be paused and the screen scrutinized for any hint of possible punkery. Ninety percent of what we viewed contained nothing we needed; the vast majority of the characters credited as "Punk" on IMDB were just standard street thugs, greasy bikers or Caucasoid hip-hop chumps. End tape, frown, rewind, eject, next.

Others entered the battle. Scarecrow's Spenser Hoyt began carting home dusty videos by the carload. Kier-la Janisse tracked down completely unseen rarities. Fellow movie masochists heeded the battle cry from Chicago (Simon Czerwinskyj) to New Zealand (Ant Timpson). Eventually, we'd formed a network of people that were fiercely dedicated to the most self-abusive, ridiculous, impossible film reference book of all time.

"THANKS FOR KILLING MY MOM."

Punk isn't tangible, and those that flaunt its standard fashions are by no means intrinsically linked to the movement. Still, as we started to scour cinema's lowest moments, it became apparent that we needed to establish some sort of criteria. We'd set out to document punks as they were represented in movies, and in many cases, a bright green spiked hairdo blew the whistle. But it wasn't always that easy.

After much discussion on what would earn a character's inclusion in the book, we agreed that the punk(s) must be visually identifiable and/or the character(s) must express a strong dedication to some variation of the punk lifestyle (new wave, straight edge, etc). This weeded out metalheads, back-alley bruisers, dreadlocked groovers and zipper-vested "Beat It" extras. Weepy goths, industrial wasteoids and blow-dried Duran Duran mall-crawlers would have to show extra gumption to qualify. Some blue-collar skinheads toed the line while others were penalized for suckling a cleaner, militaristic teat.

The mohawk has long been The Great Punk Indicator, but is sometimes worn by non-applicable combat-crazed steroid warriors (*Street Fighter*) and tanned muscleheads (*South Beach Academy*). Even heavy-hitting heroes like Travis Bickle and Mr. T were excluded, as their methods of personal expression either preceded punk or existed on an entirely separate plane (T has stated to the press that his hairstyle is inspired by the Mandika tribe and he has no interest in any type of rock music).

Also, if an actor personally is—or has at any time been—a punk but is playing a non-punk character (i.e. Henry Rollins in *Lost Highway* or Lee Ving in *Clue*), there's no reason for that performance to be included here. Just as when Shaq played the title role in *Kazaam*, he was a genie, not a basketball player.

This project had a starting point of 1974, when the term "Punk Rock" was coined to describe the evolution music was taking. We selected a cut-off date of 1999, allowing us a lengthy but finite span to draw from. The 21st century had seen no advancements in the field of punk, very few in anything else, and was deemed a lost cause.

TV had been as much a driving force of punk mockery as the film industry. Initially, we planned to include televised offenses against the movement, but realized the scope was gargantuan and the materials would be even more difficult to find. Besides, look at how damn big this book is already. That being said, made-for-TV movies and full-length TV specials released on home video are covered.

We reviewed features from all countries, but the film had to be available in English, either subtitled or dubbed. However, if it wasn't ever officially released on any home video format, it was still our duty to track it down. The only genre that was roundly excluded was anime. It's boring and none of us wanted to watch it.

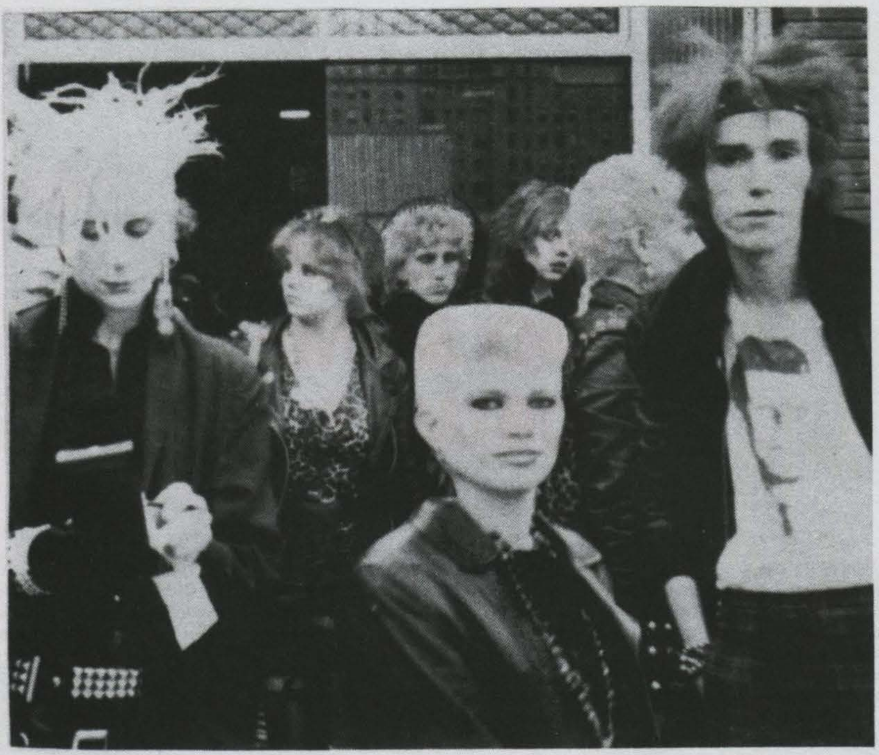
The occasional crucial short is included (like *The Last Pogo* and *Debt Begins at 20*), but our primary aim was feature-length narratives and documentaries. Live rock videos that focused on a single music group were out, as were music video/clip collections. Though their output is not represented here, we give the greatest respect to companies like Target Video and Flipside who documented emerging scenes through live concert footage.

"LET'S GO DO SOME CRIMES."

This book celebrates great accomplishments, terrible insults and the people responsible for both. We strived to reverentially recall one of the most vital chapters in mankind's cultural history as captured by daring innovators and cash-crazed fad vampires. Our ultimate hope is that *Destroy All Movies!!!* will entertain, but also stand as an archaeological record of a maligned but powerful pioneering force.

What you're holding is the result of over half a decade of bitter struggle. Enjoy it.

"NO RULES!!!!,"
Zack Carlson
Austin, TX



PUNK ROCK

EXTRAS

AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCED

469-3016

JANET CUNNINGHAM

DESTROY **ALL** MOVIES!!!

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
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Destroy All Movies!!!: The Complete Guide to Punks on Film

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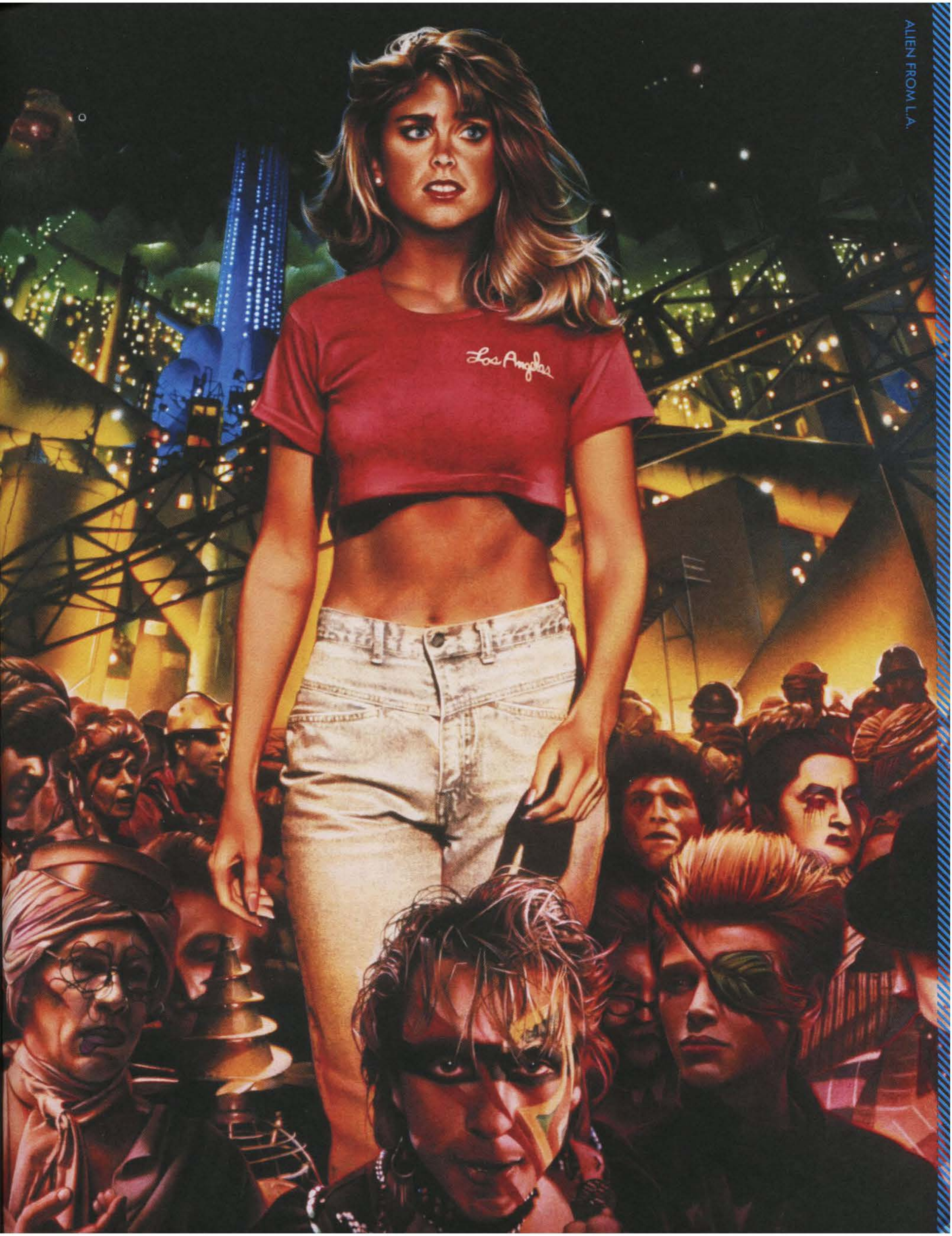
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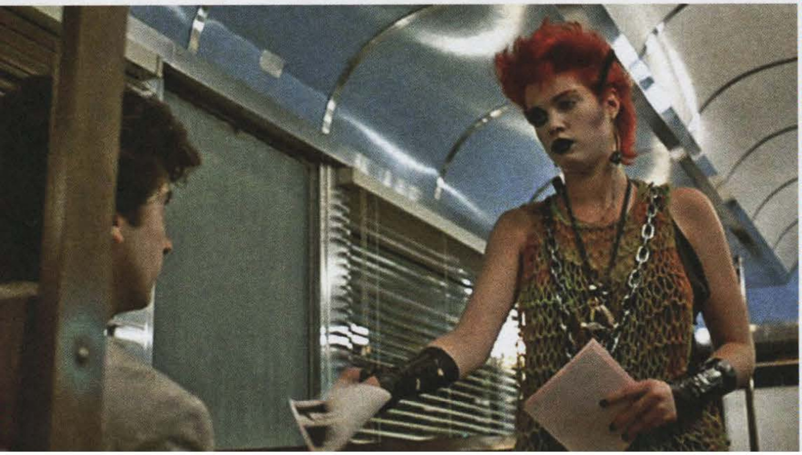
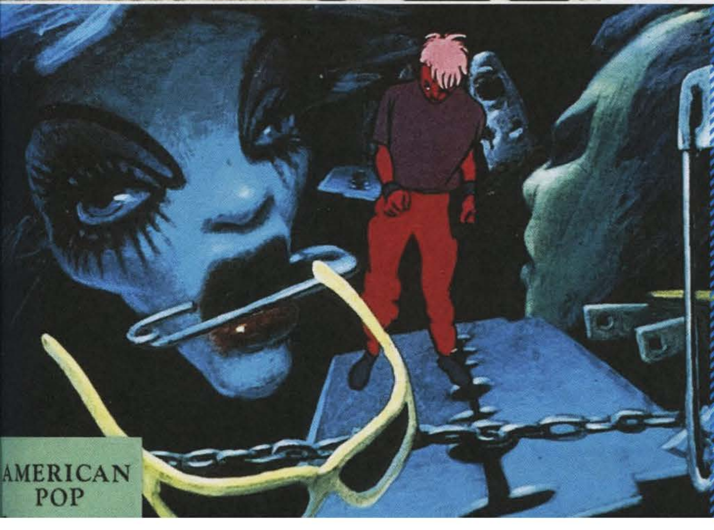
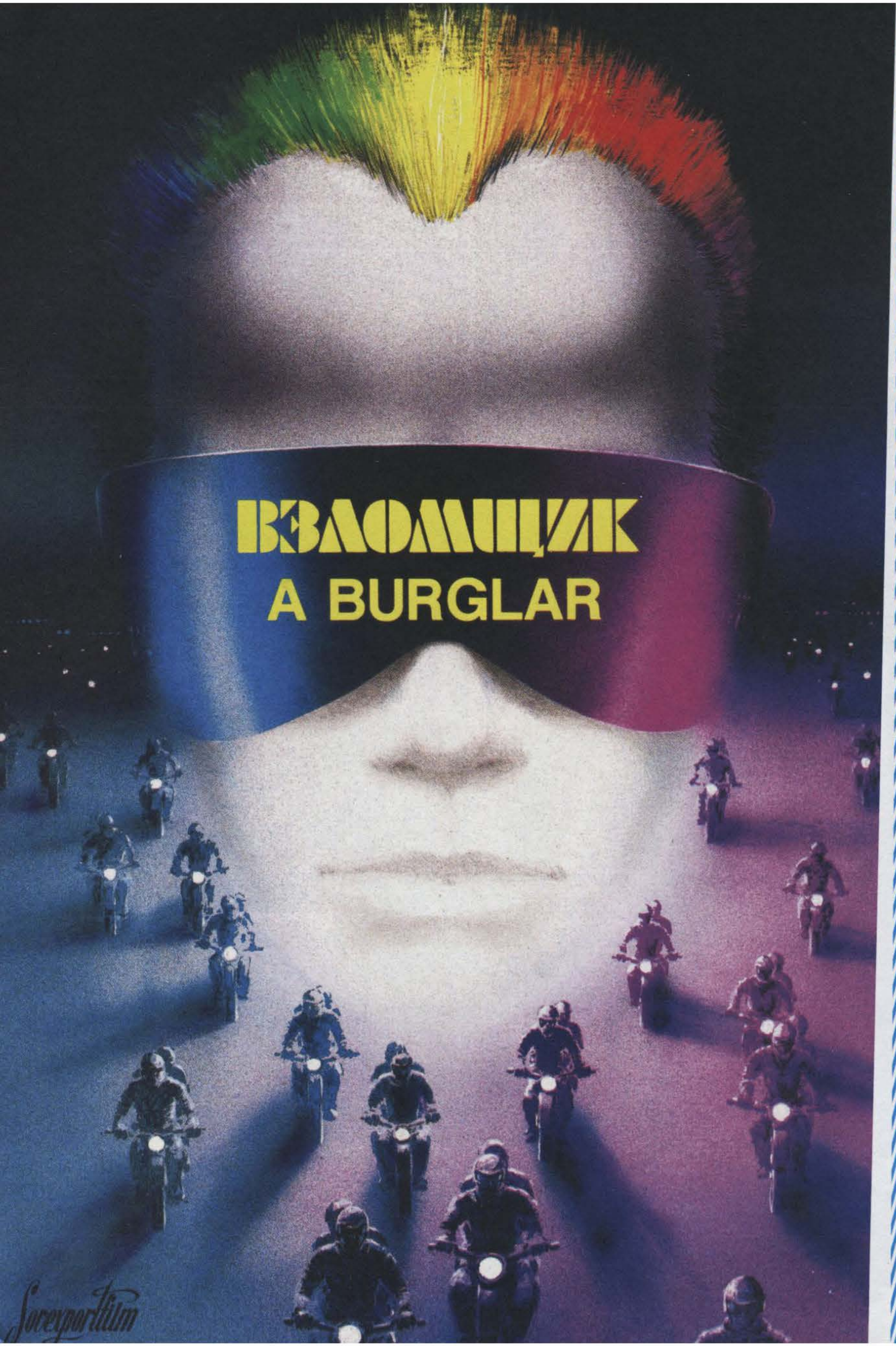


Top to bottom: BACK TO THE BEACH; AVENGING ANGELS; AFTER HOURS


AMERICAN POP

Clockwise from top left:
LA BRUNE ET MOI; ANGEL MINE;
BRAIN DAMAGE; BODY ROCK;
AMERICAN POP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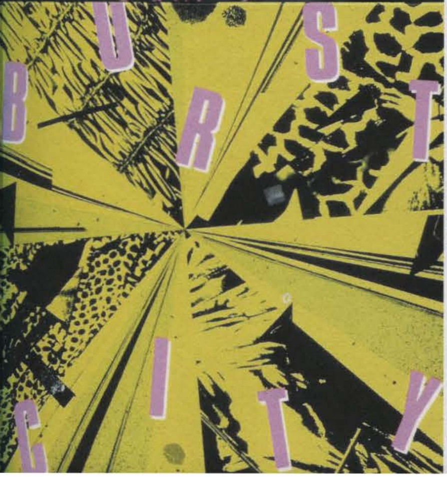

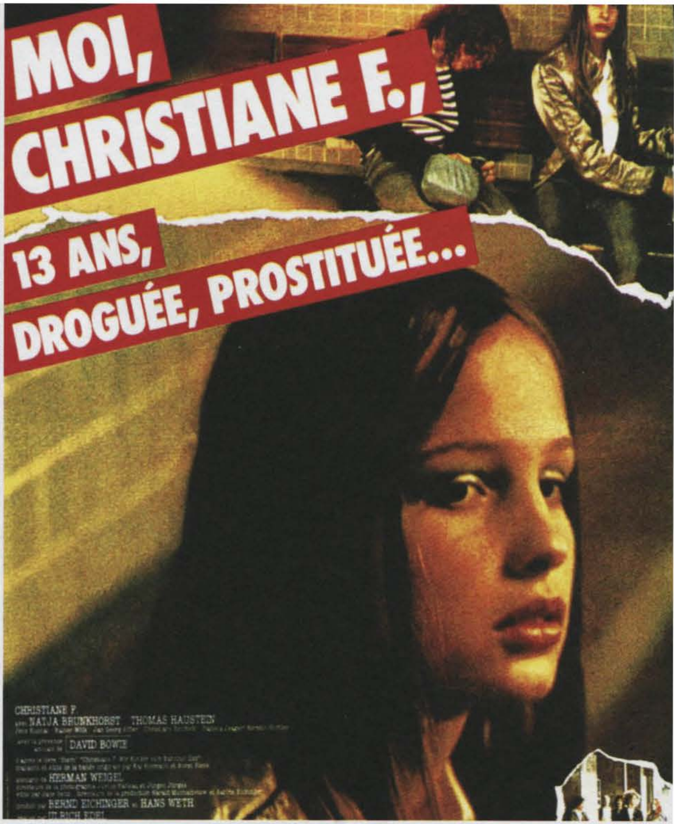
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13 ANS,
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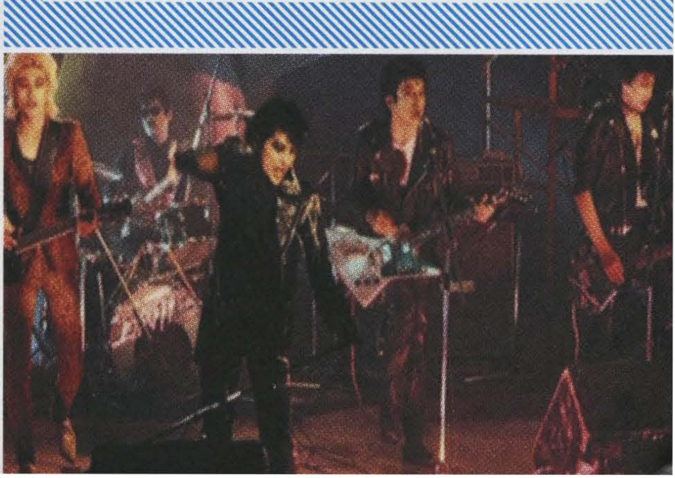
NATJA BRUNKHORST
THOMAS HAUSTEIN
DAVID BOWIE
HERMAN WEIGEL
BERND EICHINGER
HANS WETH
ULRICH EDEL

Opposite page: THE BURGLAR

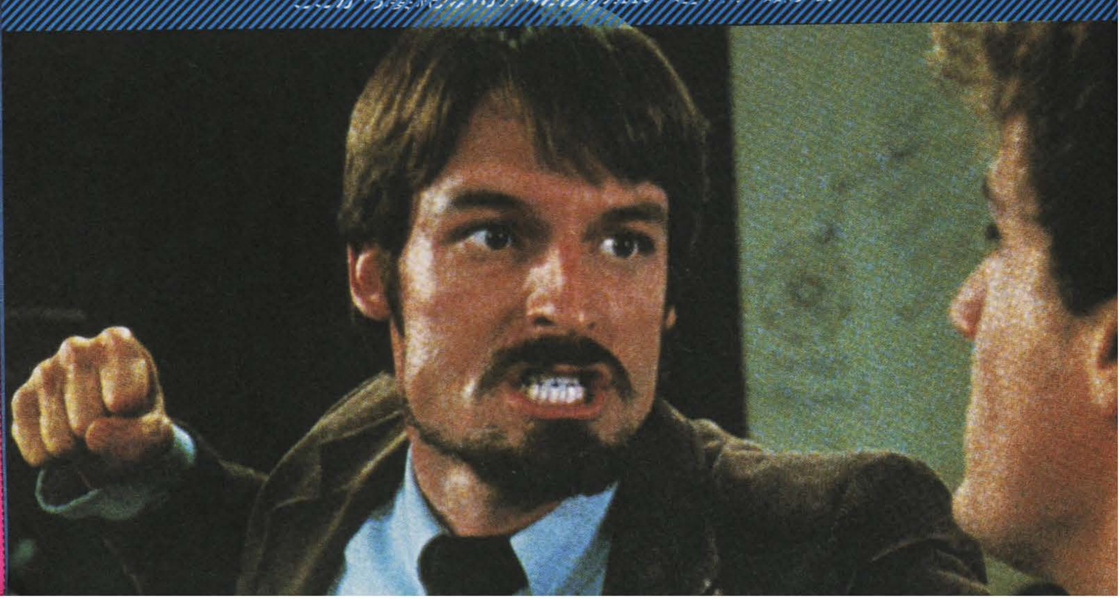
This page, clockwise from top left: BREAKING GLASS; CHRISTIANE F.; BURST CITY; BURST CITY; BREAKING ALL THE RULES

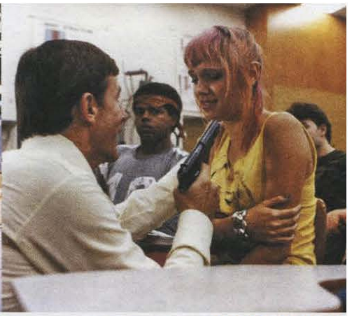


処刑教室

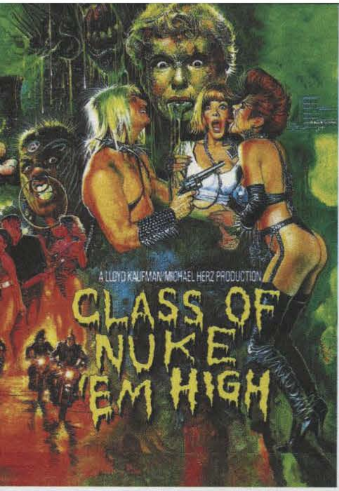
たとえ俺の生徒でも、もう我慢できない！

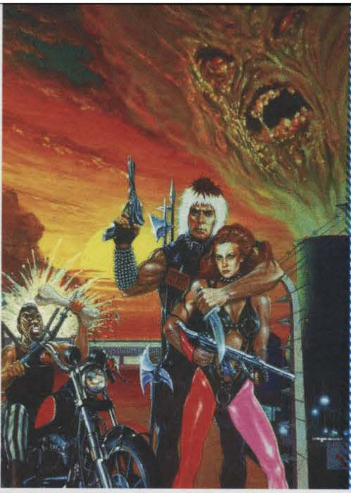
ここから凄絶な[illegible]分[illegible]秒の血の処刑が始まる！



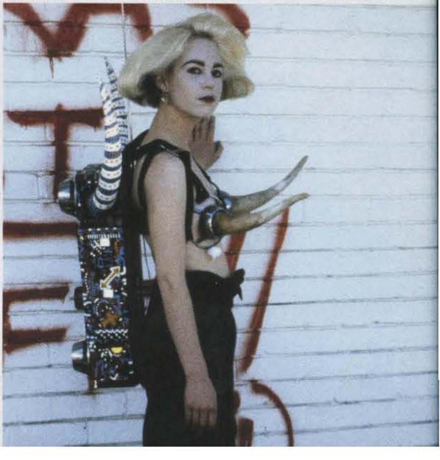


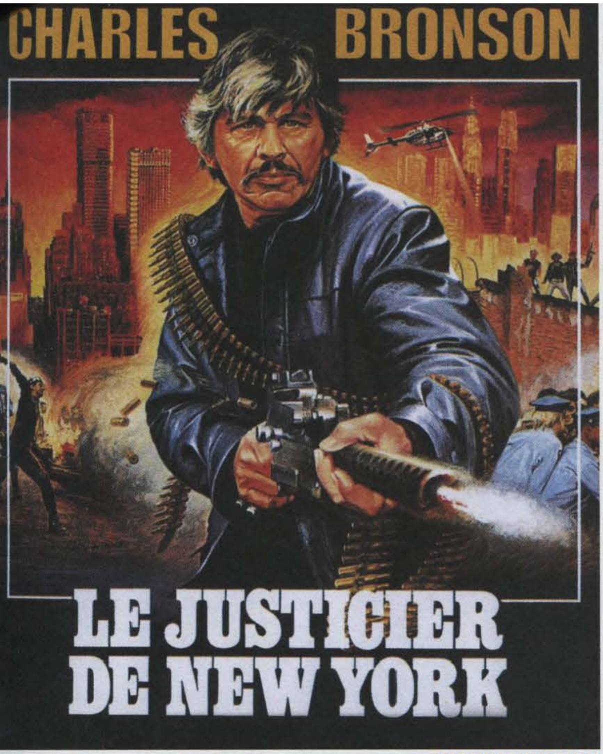
This spread: CLASS OF 1984

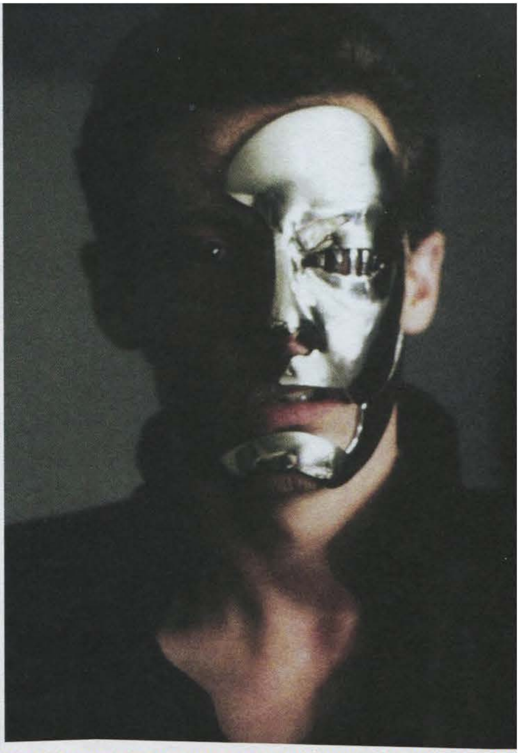

A LLOYD KAUFMAN/MICHAEL HERZ PRODUCTION
CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH

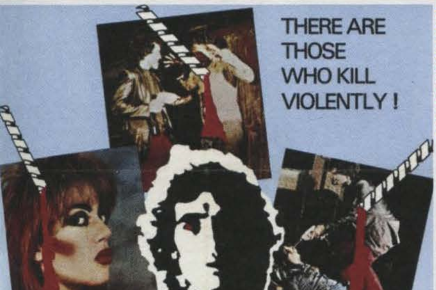


Top row: CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH
Center: CRAZY THUNDER ROAD
Bottom row: DEAD END DRIVE-IN

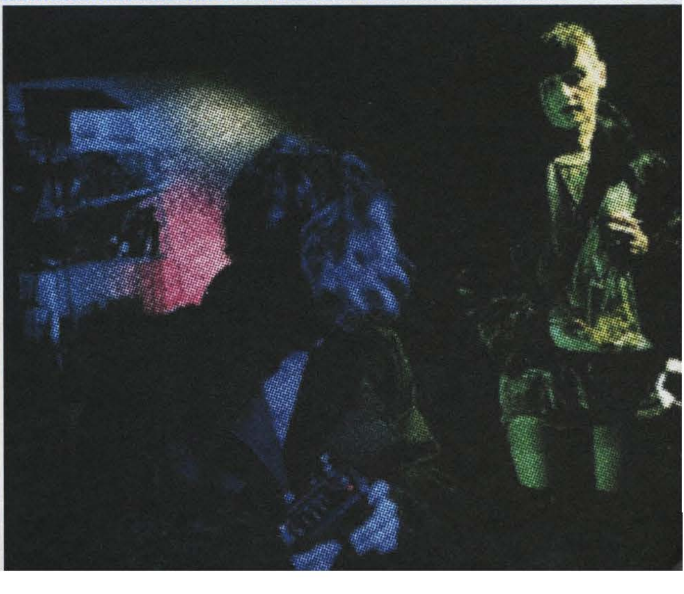


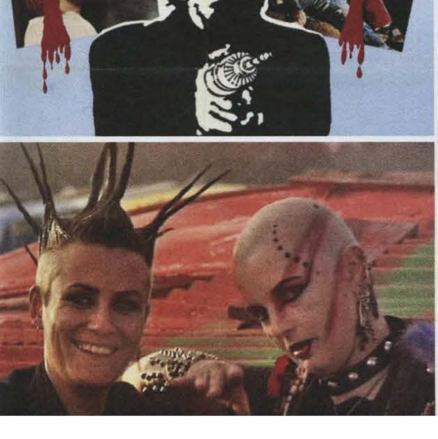

CHARLES BRONSON
LE JUSTICIER DE NEW YORK

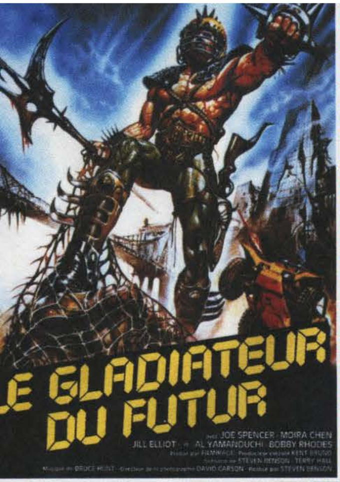


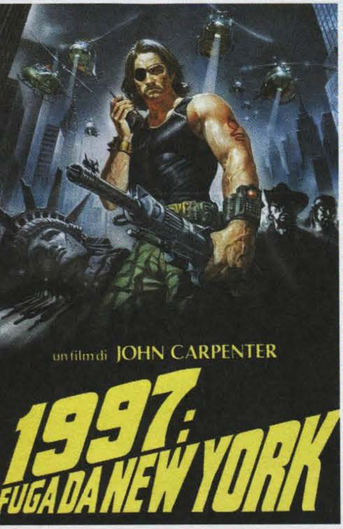

THERE ARE THOSE WHO KILL VIOLENTLY !

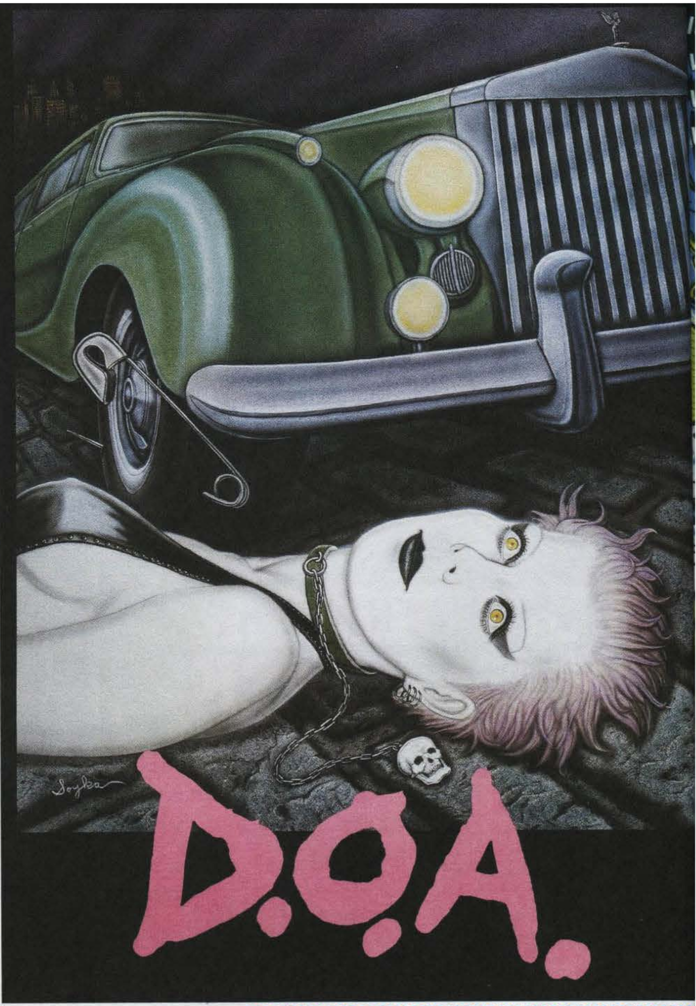
Clockwise from top left: DEATH WISH 3; DEMONS; DECODER; DEAD END DRIVE-IN; DRILLER KILLER



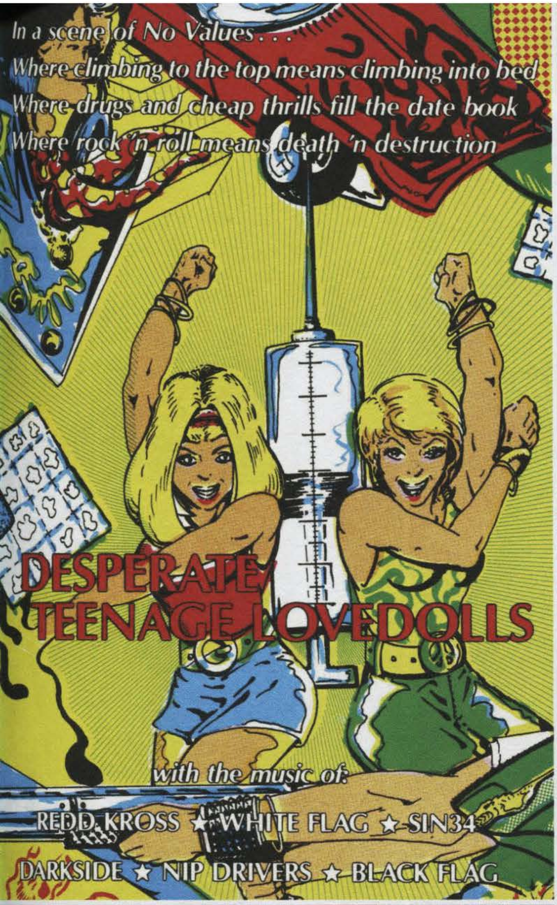



LE GLADIATEUR
DU FUTUR
JOE SPENCER · MOIRA CHEN
JILL ELLIOT · AL YAMANOUCHI · BOBBY RHODES
KENT BRUNO
STEVEN BENSON · TERRY HALL
BRUCE HUST · DAVID CARSON · STEVEN BENSON

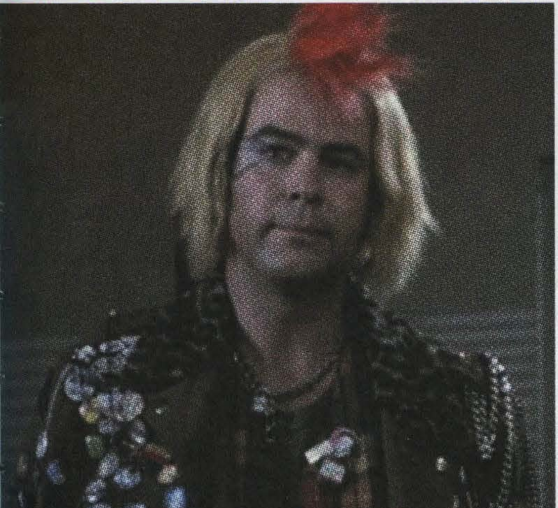

un film di JOHN CARPENTER
1997:
FUGA DA NEW YORK



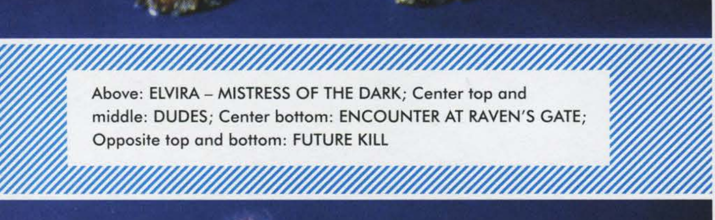
Clockwise from top right:
D.O.A.; THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION; ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK; ENDGAME

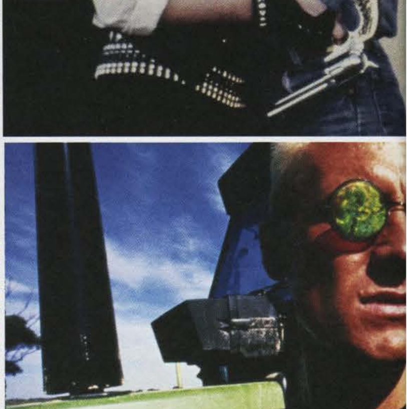

In a scene of No Values . . .
Where climbing to the top means climbing into bed
Where drugs and cheap thrills fill the date book
Where rock 'n roll means death 'n destruction
DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS
with the music of:
REDD KROSS ★ WHITE FLAG ★ SIN34
DARKSIDE ★ NIP DRIVERS ★ BLACK FLAG

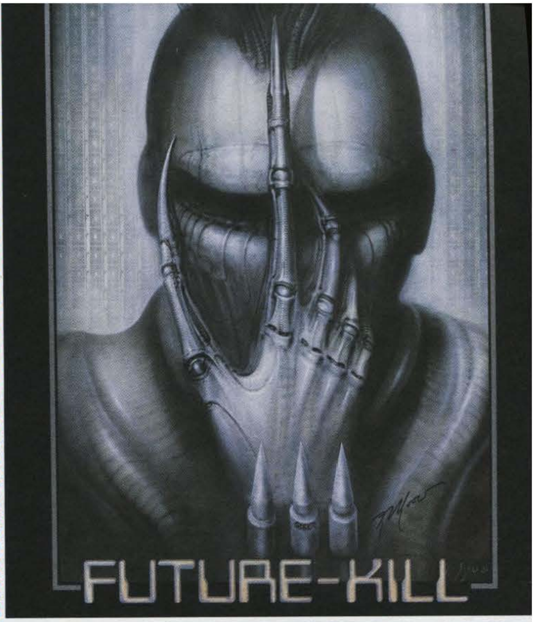
Left and above: DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS
Below left: DRAGNET; Below right: DOLLS

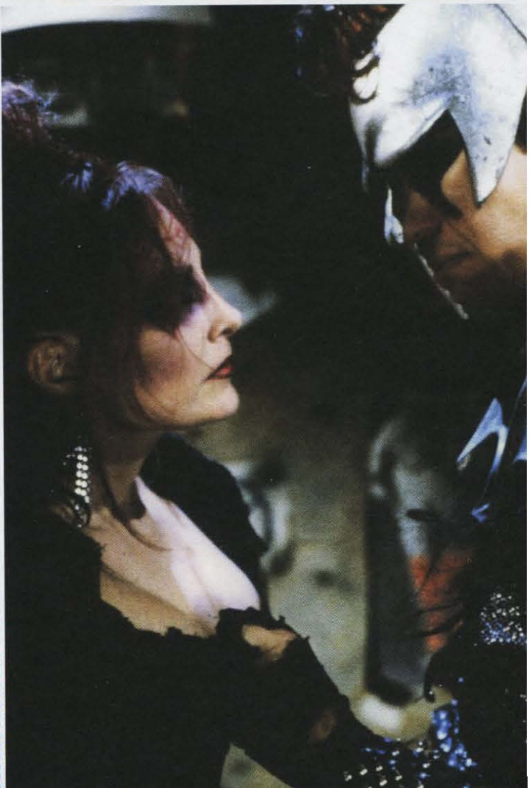


Above: ELVIRA – MISTRESS OF THE DARK; Center top and middle: DUDES; Center bottom: ENCOUNTER AT RAVEN'S GATE; Opposite top and bottom: FUTURE KILL

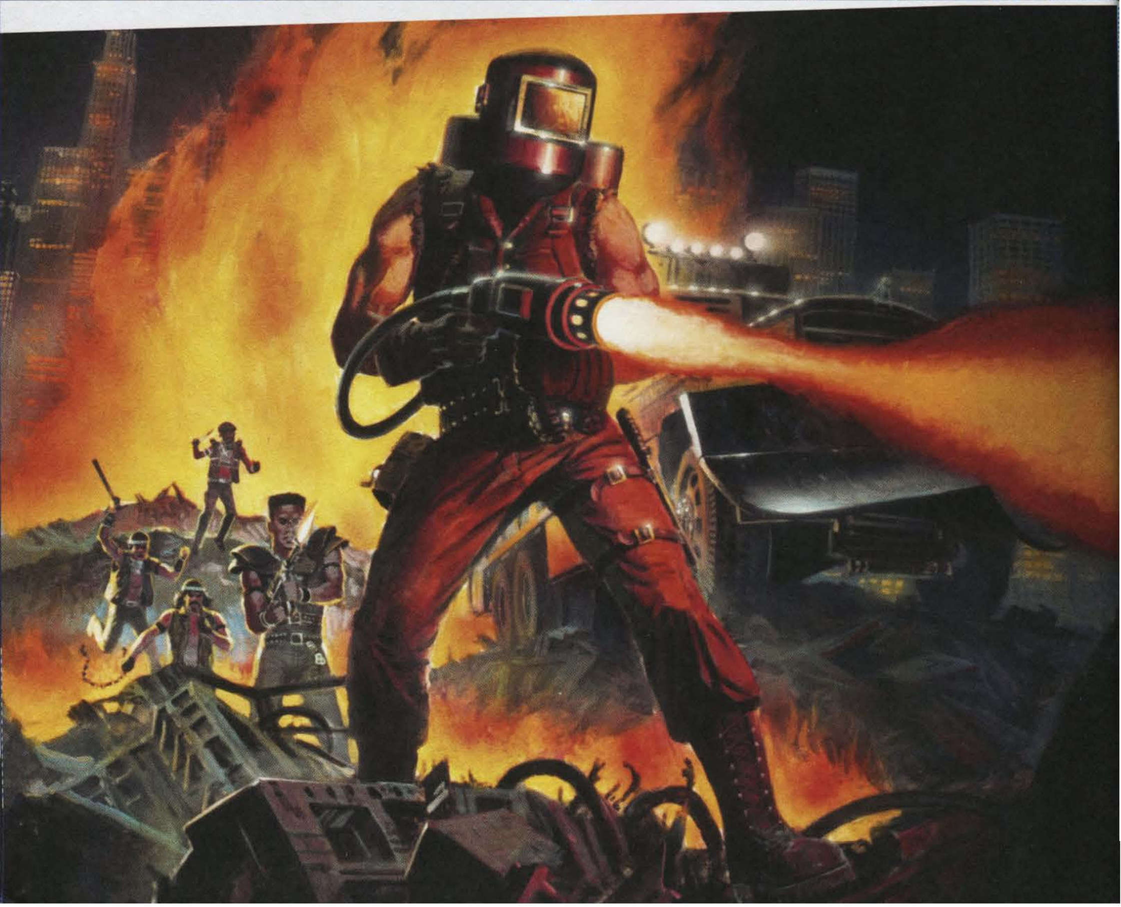


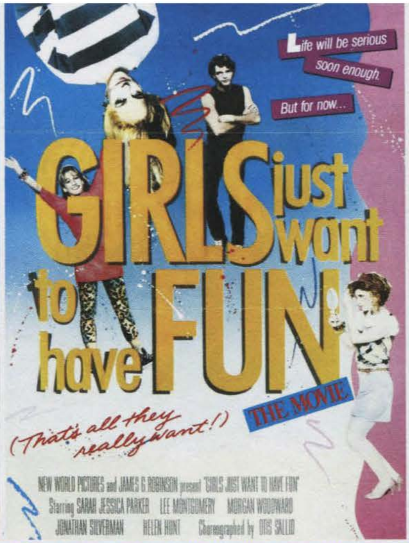



FUTURE-KILL



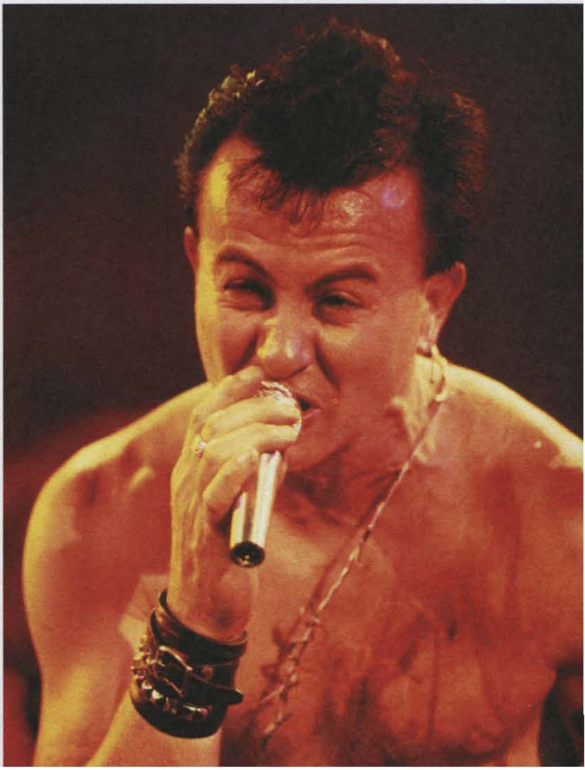
GO AWAY
NADA

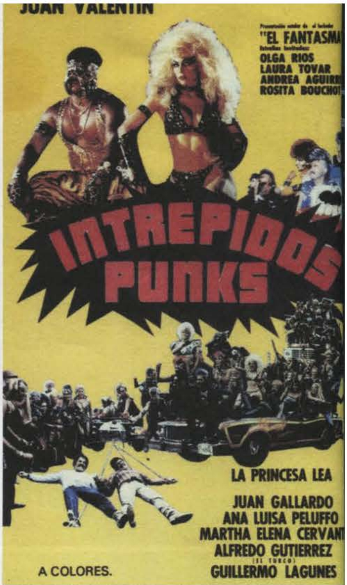




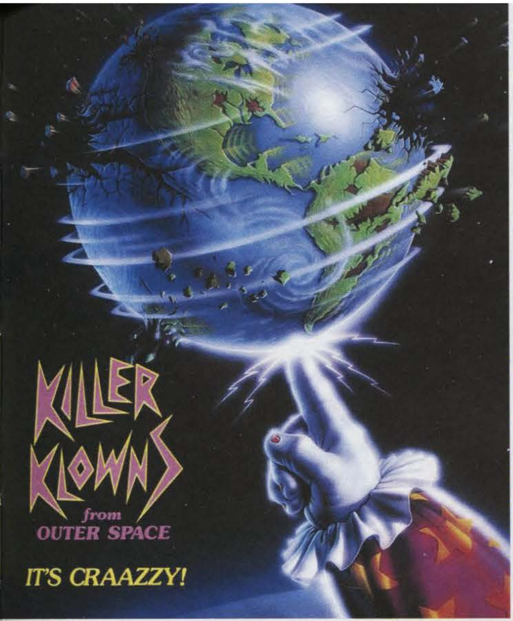
Life will be serious
soon enough.
But for now...
GIRLS just want to have FUN
THE MOVIE
(That's all they really want!)
NEW WORLD PICTURES and JAMES G. ROBINSON present 'GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN'
Starring SARAH JESSICA PARKER LEE MONTGOMERY MORGAN WOODWARD
JONATHAN SILVERMAN HELEN HUNT Choreographed by OTIS SALLID

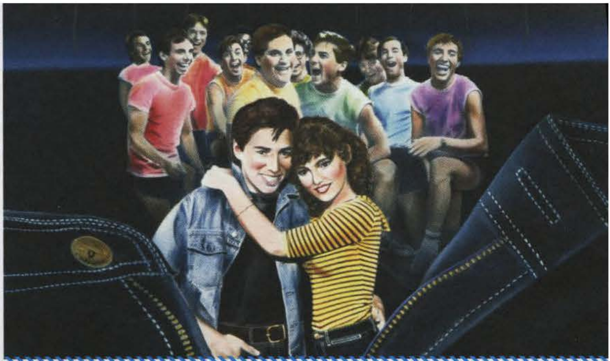
Clockwise from opposite, top: GET CRAZY; GEEK MAGGOT BINGO; GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN; JUBILEE; GET CRAZY; HOWLING II; EXTERMINATOR 2



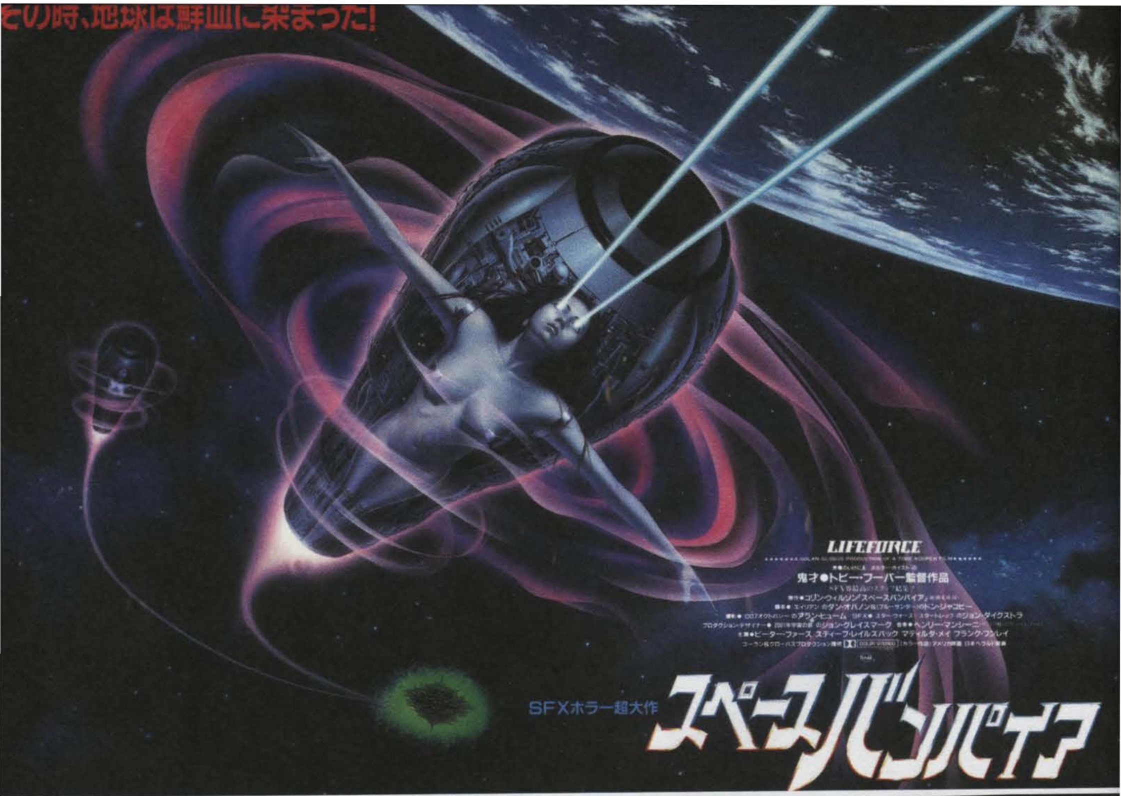

JUAN VALENTIN
"EL FANTASMA
OLGA RIOS
LAURA TOVAR
ANDREA AGUIRR
ROSITA BOUCHOT
INTREPIDOS PUNKS
LA PRINCESA LEA
JUAN GALLARDO
ANA LUISA PELUFFO
MARTHA ELENA CERVANT
ALFREDO GUTIERREZ
(EL TURCO)
GUILLERMO LAGUNES
A COLORES.

Clockwise from above left: HIGHWAY TO HELL; INTREPIDOS PUNKS; LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE FABULOUS STAINS

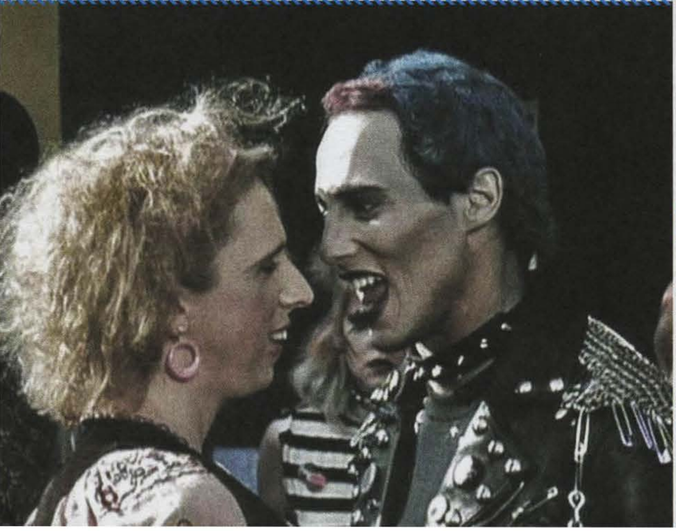

KILLER
KLOWNS
from
OUTER SPACE
IT'S CRAAZZY!

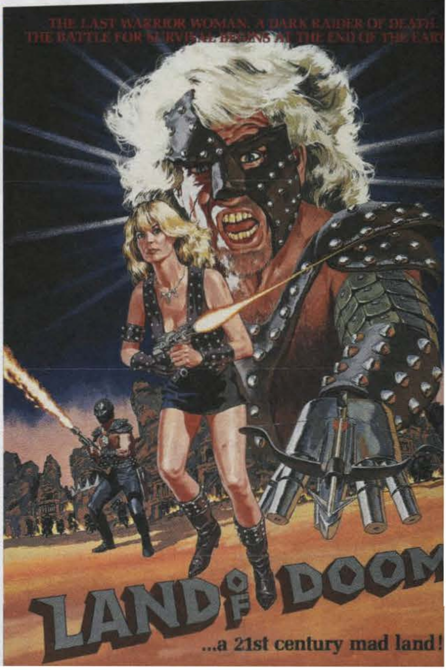


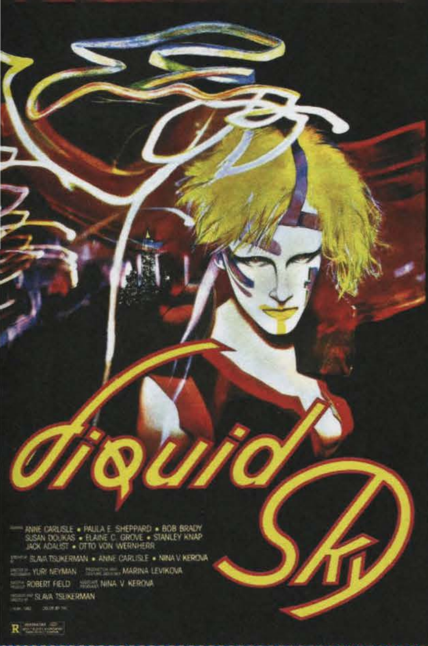
Clockwise from left: KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE; THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN; LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE FABULOUS STAINS


その時、地球は鮮血に染まった!
LIFEFORCE
鬼才●トビー・フーパー監督作品
原作●コリン・ウィルソン「スペースバンパイア」
脚本● 「エイリアン」のダン・オバノン＆「ブルーサンダー」のドン・ジャコビー
撮影● 「007オクトパシー」のアラン・ヒューム　SFX● 「スター・ウォーズ」「スタートレック」のジョン・ダイクストラ
プロダクション・デザイナー● 「2001年宇宙の旅」のジョン・グレイスマーク　音楽●ヘンリー・マンシーニ
主演●ピーター・ファース　スティーブ・レイルスバック　マティルダ・メイ　フランク・フィンレイ
SFXホラー超大作
スペースバンパイア

Clockwise from top: LIFEFORCE; LAND OF DOOM; JOYSTICKS.

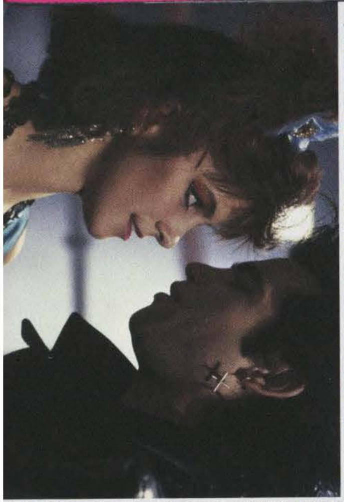


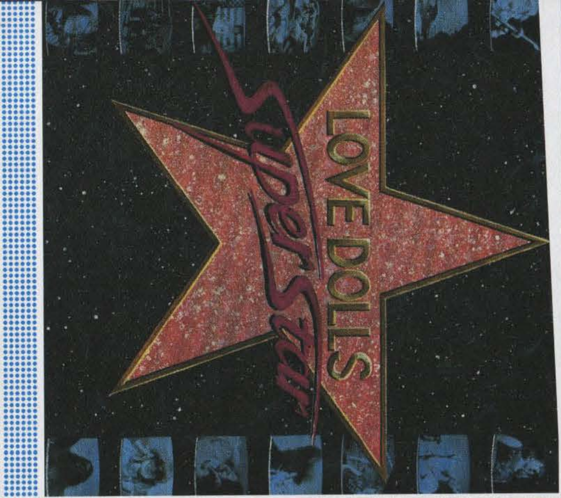

THE LAST WARRIOR WOMAN. A DARK RAIDER OF DEATH.
THE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL BEGINS AT THE END OF THE EAR
LAND OF DOOM
...a 21st century mad land!


Liquid Sky
ANNE CARLISLE • PAULA E. SHEPPARD • BOB BRADY
SUSAN DOUKAS • ELAINE C. GROVE • STANLEY KNAP
JACK ADALIST • OTTO VON WERNHERR
SLAVA TSUKERMAN • ANNE CARLISLE • NINA V. KEROVA
YURI NEYMAN
MARINA LEVIKOVA
ROBERT FIELD
NINA V. KEROVA
SLAVA TSUKERMAN
R

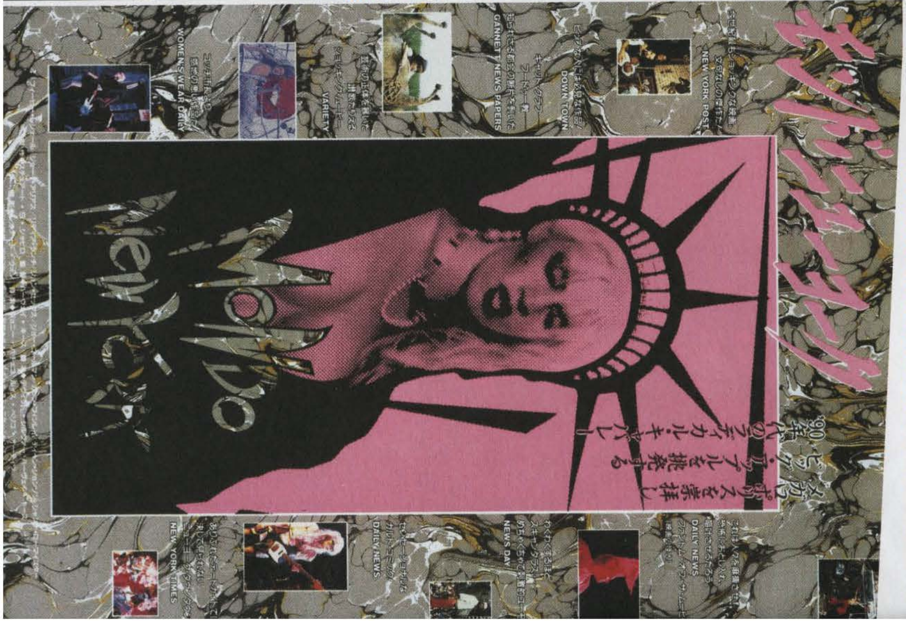
DISCOU
AQUARIUMS
TOYS

This page: LIQUID SKY



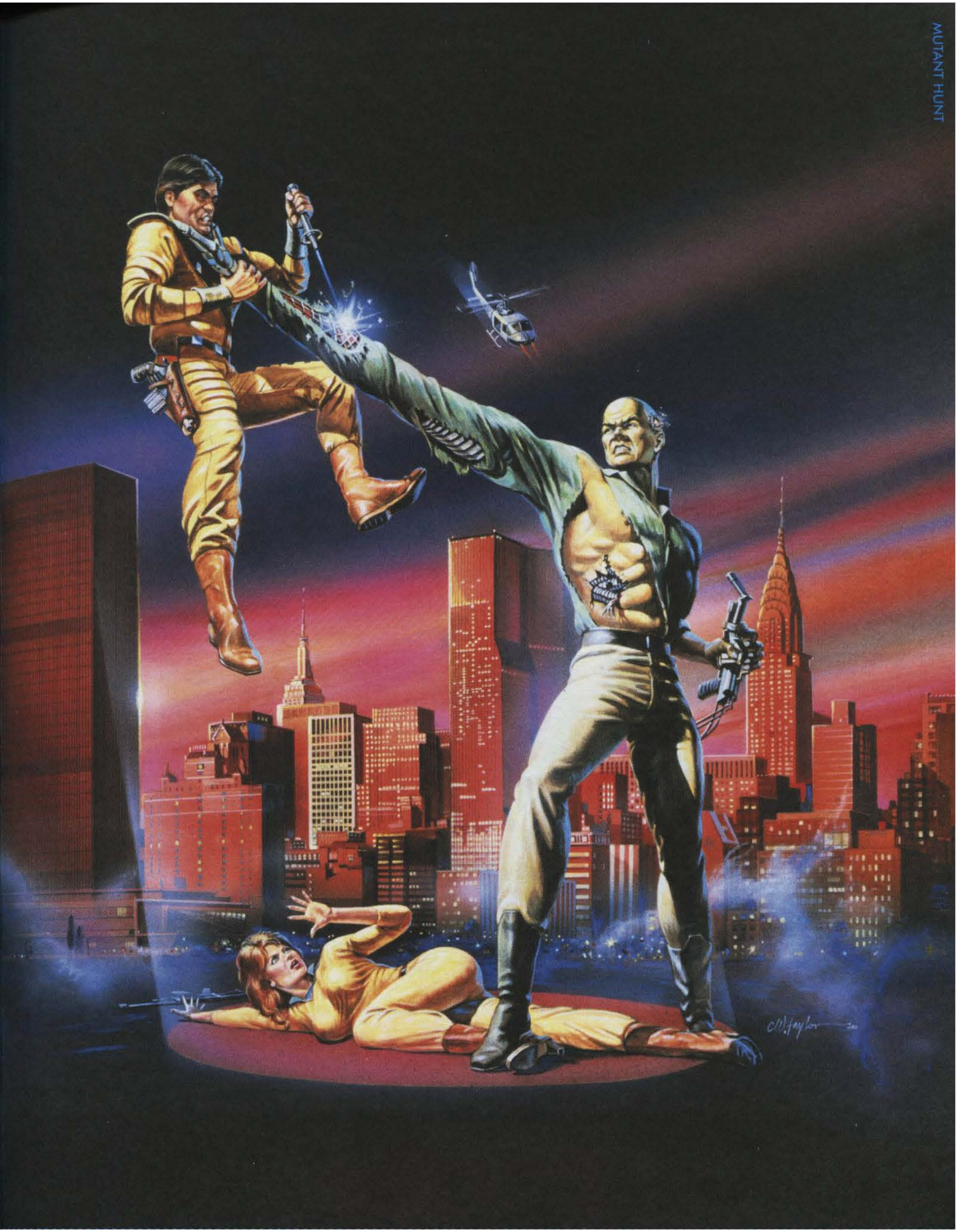


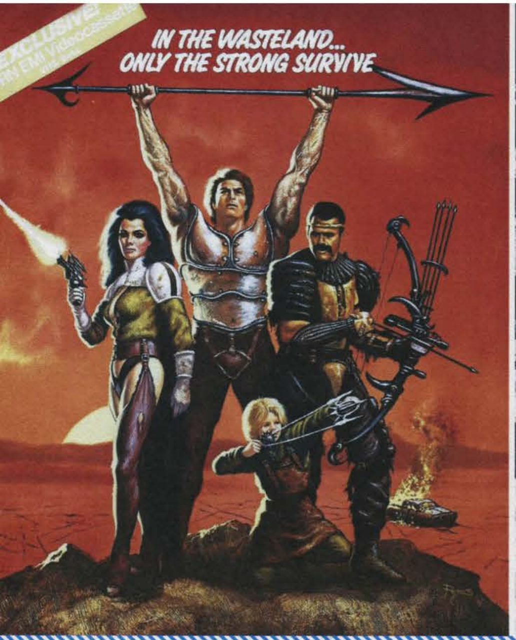
LOVE DOLLS
Super Star



MONDO NEW YORK
DOWN TOWN
GANNETT NEWS PAPERS
VARIETY
WOMEN'S WEAR DAILY
NEW YORK POST
DAILY NEWS
NEWS DAY
NEW YORK TIMES

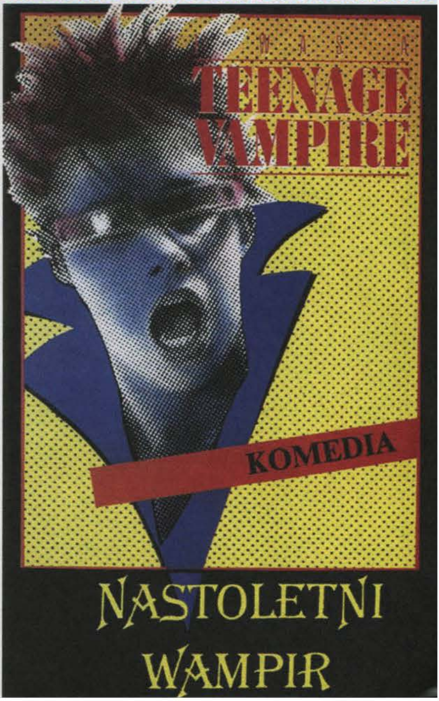
Clockwise from left: MORONS FROM OUTER SPACE; MONDO NEW YORK; MODERN GIRLS; LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR


C.W. Taylor

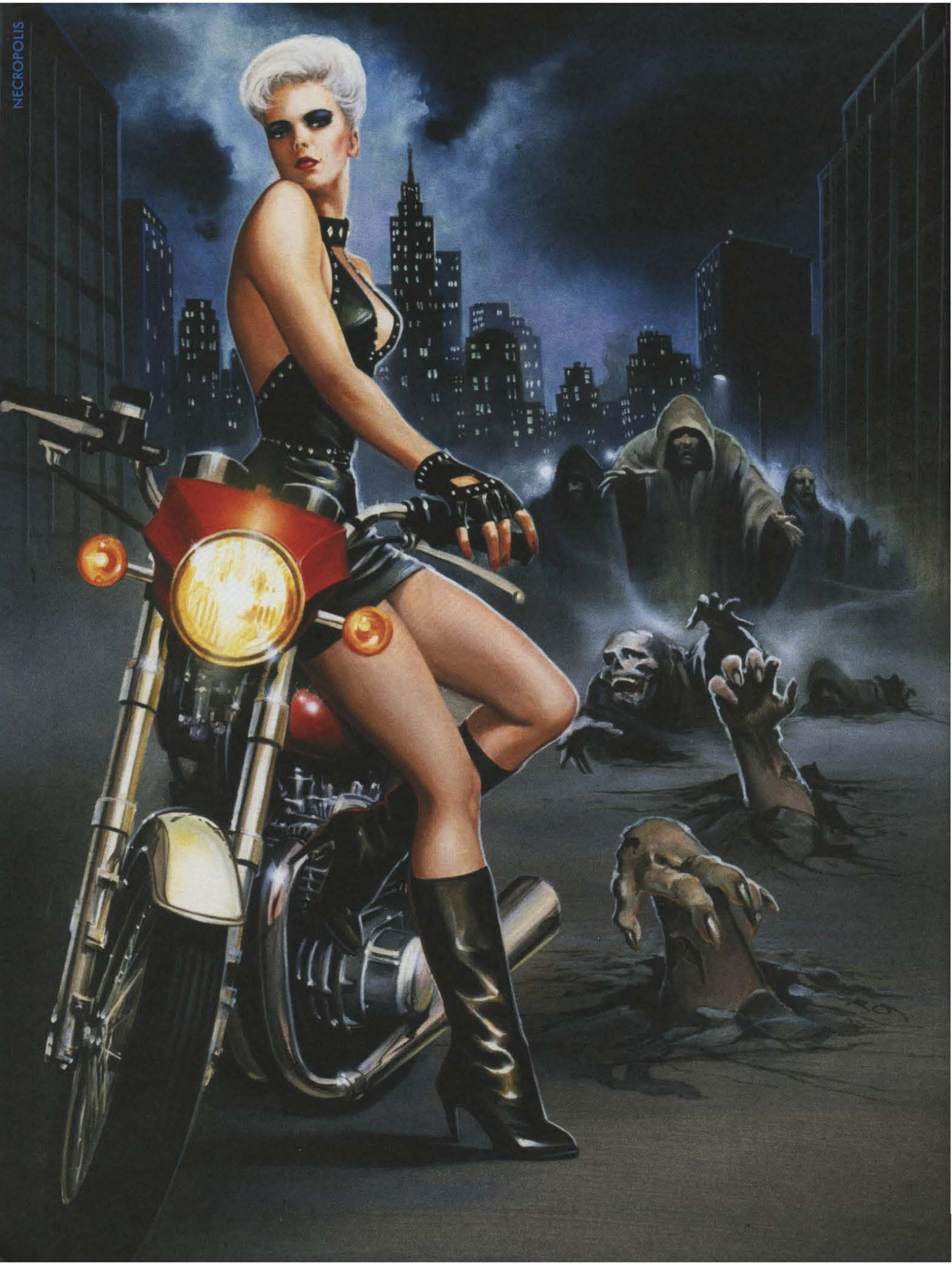

EXCLUSIVE!
IN THE WASTELAND...
ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE

Clockwise from top left: THE NEW BARBARIANS; NEVER TOO YOUNG TO DIE; NIGHT OF THE DEMONS

Clockwise from top: NECROPOLIS; MY BEST FRIEND IS A VAMPIRE; THE NEW BARBARIANS


TEENAGE VAMPIRE
KOMEDIA
NASTOLETNI WAMPIR

NECROPOLIS



CONTRIBUTOR KEY

(ZC)	Zack Carlson
(BC)	Bryan Connolly
(SH)	Spenser Hoyt
(KJ)	Kier-la Janisse
(SC)	Simon Czerwinskyj
(LAF)	Laura Ashley Fleischauer
(RF)	Rob Fletcher
(TS)	Thomas Swenson
(JS)	Jesse Sundvall
(JH)	Janet Hammer
(BB)	Bret Berg
(BI)	Bridget Irish
(AT)	Andrew Toms
(BLB)	Bryn Borum
(KK)	Kevin Kogin
(SW)	Scott Weinberg
(ANT)	Ant Timpson

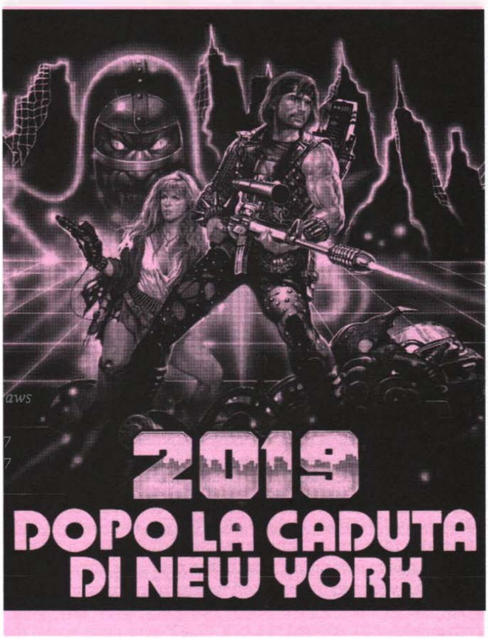
All interviews by Zack Carlson except:
Stefan Arngrim and Christopher Petit
by Kier-la Janisse
Dave Markey by Janet Hammer
Alex Cox by Laura Ashley Fleischauer

[illegible]

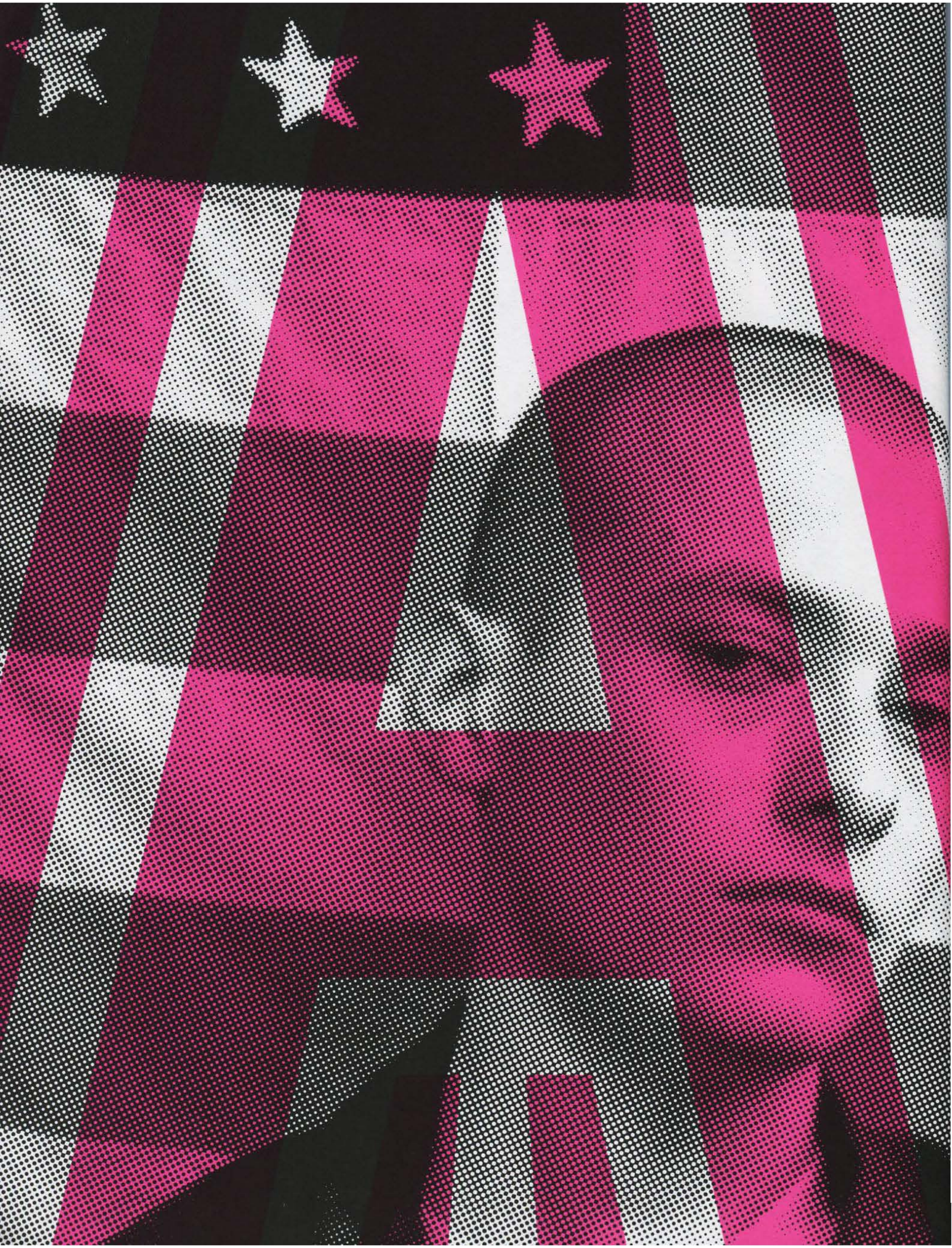
2019: AFTER THE FALL OF NEW YORK

Dir. Sergio Martino / 1983

[illegible]


2019
DOPO LA CADUTA
DI NEW YORK

BATTLEZONE



ACCELERATION PUNK

Dir. Robert Glassman / 1977

A primordial, chaotic camcorder view of Europe's burgeoning punk scene.

Carnival footage is intercut with early, urgent performances by The Jam and The Police. People scream, roll around on apartment floors and watch lesser-known bands like French act Stinky Toys. Professionally shot film footage of The Damned doing "New Rose" is followed by an exhibitionistic audience member disrobing during American icon Wayne County's "You Make Me Cream in My Jeans." County later does a full costume/gender change on stage in mid-song. Borrowed footage of the Sex Pistols' legendary boat concert is included. And so this short, loose French production goes: calamitous, amateurish, directionless and hugely entertaining for the punk-history completist. *(ZC)*

ACE VENTURA: PET DETECTIVE

Dir. Tom Shadyac / 1994

An obnoxious man who claims to solve pet related crimes is on the case of a missing dolphin.

Chaplin had his pathos. Keaton had his fearless stunt work. Carrey talks with his ass. This film sparked the Jim Carrey hitfest that continued through the '90s with *Dumb and Dumber* and *The Mask*, offering middle school boys across America a stockpile of quotes. This film (and its sequel) is Carrey at his wildest. Ventura is equal parts klutz, impersonator and uberpest. During his investigation, he attends a Cannibal Corpse show, where various period-appropriate grungers and a man with an oversized mohawk circle him in the pit. Udo Kier plays a German. *(BC)*

THE ACCIDENTAL TOURIST

Dir. Lawrence Kasdan / 1988

Boring schlub re-awakened by irreverent love.

William Hurt personifies the detached white everyman. With his perpetual hangdog expression and Dramamine drawl, he slumps and shuffles about in a fog of middle class malaise. This guy could blot out the Eastern Seaboard with projected dreariness. He emanates so much disdain and boredom that it's nearly metaphysical.

So of course Hurt is going to be plopped down in something as cozily soft as *The Accidental Tourist*. He plays Macon Leary, a travel writer whose son has been killed in a shooting, and as a result of his admirable detachment, his wife has left him. According to Hollywood, Macon needs a healthy dose of off-the-cuff unconventionality in the form of spunky dog trainer Geena Davis to shake him out of his existential funk. Lots of snore-inducing soul searching ensues as the old human speed bump can't make up his mind about anything, drifting listlessly through the hazy gauze of Lawrence Kasdan's tasteful, inert direction.

The lone spark comes in the form of the three '77 style punks Leary crosses paths with in London. The trio's leader has the leather jacket ensemble down, with a real trophy of a mohawk to bring it all together. He's trailed by a blue-haired moptop wearing a striking pink scarf, and a stunning goth punk with a high rise rat's nest of orange hair, providing the only dabs of color in the entire film. (SC)

ACTION

Dir. Tinto Brass / 1980

A man is caught in a surreal world.

Brass' first film to follow his notorious *Caligula* is composed of plotless, meandering journeys through various sets. The handsomely hollow Luc Merenda takes the lead, wandering from graveyards to bathrooms to wastelands while interacting with assorted goofs and amputees. In a horizon-spanning junkyard, he cowers from the sudden arrival of a gang of Dali-esque punks, each wildly and/or scantily clad and bearing a heavy layer of facepaint. Nudity, swastikas and bondage gear are the favorites of these borderline clowns as they initimidate a terrified hobo. One of the males wears a gorilla fur jacket and rubber breasts while a lady cohort dangles a plastic baby doll on a cord from her vagina. The gang eventually turns their sights on our hero; terrorizing him with strap-on penises and facial triangles. The fashion-retarded non-humans force him to dance at gunpoint before they run off into the horizon.

Action was a stylistic departure for Italian filmmaker Tinto Brass, who was often known as a buttocks-obsessed erotic auteur. Though he performs very little of his trademarked bun fetishizing here, there are certainly a fair number of rumps on display. It's possible that the secret of his muse lies in his name, which—if you remove just three letters—becomes "*into ass.*" *(ZC)*

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

Dir. Barry Sonnenfeld / 1991

The world's most macabre family encounters a conniving foe.

This rambunctious tribute to the classic creations of cartoonist Charles Addams has a great deal more pep than the '60s TV series, largely due to Christopher Lloyd's enthusiastic performance as Uncle Fester. When the film kicks off, Fester is missing and the Addams clan yearns for him dearly, especially his brother Gomez (Raul Julia). A corrupt real estate investor masterminds a plan to pass off her pasty, hulking son as the long-lost member of the Addams family, and through a cornball maelstrom of mistaken identity and wacky coincidences, all is set right.

Director Sonnenfeld had already established himself as a talented cinematographer for the Coen Brothers, but unleashed on his own project he's an aesthetic maniac. The Addams' manor is chock-full of enough high-end Halloween Superstore ephemera to choke ten Tim Burtons. Most impressive is the Addams' gala family reunion ball, where every form of ghoul is present, including ever-popular hairball Cousin It. A child in a particularly lazy punk costume is among a group of trick-or-treaters frightened by gargantuan butler Lurch at the end of the film. *(ZC)*

THE ADVENTURES OF FORD FAIRLANE

Dir. Renny Harlin / 1990

Detective-to-the-rock-stars Ford Fairlane (Andrew "Dice" Clay) must find Ms. Zuzu Petals before a gang of murderous misfits do some serious damage.

Don't listen to what anybody says. This movie is great.

Those who thought the Diceman's sexist stand-up personality was "The Real Him" just don't understand his comic genius. This film showcases it all: he croons, makes faces, does noises, chain-smokes and drops one-liners like they were pretzels. He's brilliant, no foolin'. Sure, the plot is weak, but the supporting cast could make up for a hundred lame scripts. Ed O'Neill yells "Bootytime!" and shakes his tail feather. Mötley Crüe frontman Vince Neil dies and his corpse rolls down a hill. Gilbert Gottfried is a DJ led around on a leash by Priscilla Presley. Tone Lóc raps in front of Dice's office. Morris

Day, Robert Englund, Sheila E and a half-dressed Wayne Newton... the list just goes on and they're each giving it all they've got. A punk with liberty spikes attends a funeral. A koala bear puppet eats potato chips. Newton tortures Dice's guitar until info is spilled. This movie got Harlin the director's slot for *Die Hard 2*, and its fun, glossy, non-stop craziness was possibly an unspoken template for later '90s action films like *True Romance* and *Last Action Hero*. If not, it should've been. (BC)

THE ADVENTURES OF SEBASTIAN COLE

Dir. Tod Williams / 1998

1983. A young man leaves New Jersey to go to England with his mother. He comes back a newly punkified hooligan and lives with his stepfather, who's in the process of becoming his stepmother.

This is the story of a typical American family. There's divorce, children leaving for college and sexual reassignment surgery. The main character is young Sebastian, taken by his mother to England after her second husband announces his new choice in gender. Sebastian is unhappy in the UK with his drunken mom, and in his dissatisfaction adopts the punk look (if not lifestyle). He returns to America to stepdad Hank, who is now going by Henrietta.

We follow Sebastian as he goes on his titular adventures. He wakes up in the hospital after drinking two bottles of liquor and ending up face down in a pool of blood. Next, he and his pot-retarded friends decide to truck into the city to see a punk band. There he meets a distressed bottle blonde who tells him she and her sister are being held hostage by a man called "Chi-town," and Sebastian decides to rescue them. After some brief negotiations, it's decided that Chi-town will release the girls for $11.00 and a wristwatch.

Does Sebastian learn anything? Not really. Does his family ever come together or understand one another? Come on. Does everything end up roses and buttercups? Nope. Just like a real family. (*JH*)

AFFLICTION

Dir. Mark Hejnar / 1996

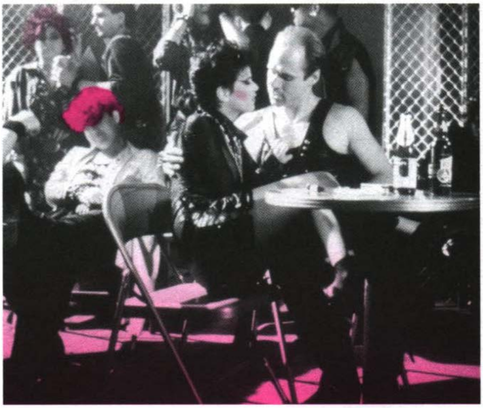
A mondo style film about "shocking" underground performance art.

A who's-who/who-cares about gross-out hollow artistic statements from talentless, empty people. A few of them cut themselves with razorblades. GG Allin licks a human butt. Darts get thrown into somebody's back. Wait a minute...you're supposed to throw those at a dartboard, but they're throwing them at a person. That's crazy. My world is totally turned upside down. Sigh. A man fucks a baby doll. Scissors touch the inside of an eyelid. A punk girl has sex. Bloody boners. Shit. Crap. Poop. The best—and only good—segment is actual art criminal Mike Diana trying to vomit on a crucifix and having a heck of a time raising his chunder. Not for the faint of heart or anybody else. (BC)

AFTER HOURS

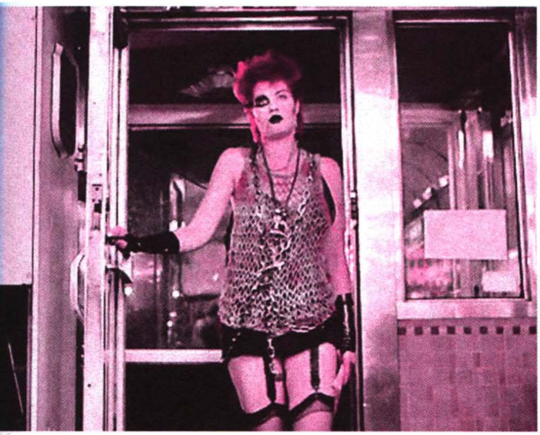
Dir. Martin Scorsese / 1985

Paul Hackett (Griffin Dunne) is unable to get home after a series of unlikely events leaves him stranded late at night in New York City's Soho district.



A wayward comedy of errors along the lines of *Into the Night* and *Something Wild*, but with a little extra darkness. This film and *King of Comedy* proved that Scorsese can pull off humor as well as drama. Here, he's definitely having fun. Dunne offers an excellent performance, giving his character subtle quirks and always playing it in a realm of believability while outlandish situations happen around him. Paul goes to the Club Berlin to look for some people. He isn't let in because he doesn't have a mohawk. Eventually, he's able to enter, but is overwhelmed by the punks slamming to Bad Brains' "Pay to Cum." Members of the crowd try to shave his head into a new wave cut, and he runs away, calling them barbarians. As over-the-top as the forced hairstyling idea is, the punks in this scene all seem like the real deal. Watch for Scorsese in a cameo, working the dance floor spotlight from a platform.

Towards the end of the film, Paul is hunted by an angry mob and is intercepted by a punk girl with red hair, a painted face and a major amount of scrap metal jewelry. The actress is Robin Johnson, who played new wave gutter icon Nicky in *Times Square*. She hands him a flyer for a conceptual art show at Club Berlin, and he heads back to the club to escape his pursuers. Rosanna Arquette plays Paul's troubled date who talks about a six-hour rape experience and her *Wizard of Oz*-obsessed ex-husband. Catherine O'Hara appears in a stud bracelet, a metal belt with a skull on it and drives



a Mr. Frosty truck. Following Scorsese's wishes, Dunne supposedly didn't sleep or have sex during the production of this film to add stress and paranoia to his character. (BC)

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Dir. Taylor Hackford / 1984

An unshaven Jeff Bridges stumbles into a heap of trouble in this remake of *Out of the Past*.

A typical '80s noir throwback that benefits by having the dad from *Webster* in it. Though full of plot twists, it's predictable, and the only surprise was the woman with intense eye make-up, chopped, messy bleached hair and bullet belt mingling with the wealthy at a posh nightclub. Later she dances to the safe sounds of Kid Creole & The Coconuts. Richard Widmark plays a corrupt angry man. He's fine. Phil Collins has his title song play over the end credits. He's paid. I watch this movie on my television. I'm bored. (BC)

AGE OF DEMONS

Dir. Damon Foster / 1992

A satanic cult targets a punk band's vocalist as the focus of their transdimensional domination plot.

The occult society Zordak completes their hundredth human sacrifice, successfully opening a powerful portal. Lackeys are dispatched to grab teenage thrasher Mitch due to his unharnessed, dormant magical powers. He's dragged into their subterranean lair where he battles female Zordakian warriors and inadvertently ushers a horned, red gorilla-creature through the demongate. The beast is unleashed into our world, tearing through the air and blowing up a station wagon with eye-borne lightning bolts. When the beast lands, it decapitates and disembowels without mercy. Only Mitch and his friends can prevent Zordak from enslaving the universe, and they'll use every type of magic, martial arts and weaponry in their quest.

That's the plot. Now here's the catch: the entire film was shot on VHS camcorder for 85 bucks. Writer/director/actor/stuntman Foster has been knocking out homemade epics like this for two decades, allowing no financial obstacle to bar his crackpot visions. Though such drive is respectable, it certainly doesn't qualify the man as an exceptionally brilliant creator. *Age of Demons* is littered with gay jokes, oversized breasts and questionable stereotypes, indicating that racism, nudity and homophobia don't cost a goddamn thing. (ZC)

THE AGE OF INSECTS

Dir. Eric Morano / 1991

An insect-obsessed quack doctor performs social experiments.

This was one of the heavier-handed products of the *Film Threat*-era independent VHS scene. Megalomaniacal mind-control madman Dr. Benedict is commissioned to reprogram a businessman's wayward son. When the boy and his friends arrive, the doctor is disgusted by their mildly punk aesthetic. He gazes at them in absolute horror through a peephole, his voiceover narration referring to them as "leather-clad lice" and "typically brutal humanoid American larvae." He pipes down when given the opportunity to view their mating practices. Later, the teens are treated to a beverage that induces a psychedelic mental breakdown, and they end up destroying the room in a chemical frenzy before being subdued with chloroform gas. Benedict performs depraved processes on his primary subject, coating him in psychotropic ooze while muttering about the boy's pupal metamorphosis. As the treatments continue, the doctor, his patient and the viewer melt into total braindeath. (ZC)

AIRHEADS

Dir. Michael Lehmann / 1994

Wayne's World meets *Dog Day Afternoon* when rock band The Lone Rangers hold the employees of a radio station hostage.

Typical early '90s comedy fluff. Brendan Fraser, Steve Buscemi and Adam Sandler are the rock combo. They tragically wear Cat-in-the-Hat hats in their first scene. A laugh riot is not in store. Pretty much just an hour and a half of usually funny people meandering around. There is however the underused/underappreciated Ernie Hudson who, in this film, is underused and underappreciated. This movie is filled with those inane late 20th century insults like "dicksmoke," "butt puppet" and "dick cheeseburger." Punks show up in crowd scenes, especially toward the end when a group amasses outside the radio station. A dude in a mohawk yells "Barney Fife" at a cop played by a babyfaced Chris Farley. Beavis and Butt-head make an embarrassing voice-only cameo as two youngsters who phone the station. Michael Richards is enjoyable as his usual stumblin' self, especially when he sets fire to someone's green hair. The Lone Rangers' hit "Degenerated" was actually performed by hard-luck punk legends Reagan Youth. (BC)

ALIEN FROM L.A.

Dir. Albert Pyun / 1988

A young woman stumbles upon a lost civilization that strives to deny (and end) her existence.

Unbelievably shrill *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model Kathy Ireland makes her cinematic debut as Wanda Saknussemm, a beach bunny in search of her missing father. She accidentally follows his trail to the Earth's core, where the subterranean civilization of Atlantis exists in a state of malfunctioning, post-apocalyptic film noir aesthetics. Though the denizens of the sunken city have avoided learning anything of the surface world, their technology and spoken language is 100% 1988 American, including their fashion sense, which runs half Saudi Arabian/half mall-purchased new wave. Wanda quickly finds herself on the lam, hiding from the "alien"-fearing

underworld government, and by the time they've put a price on her head, she's already become a local celebrity. She allies herself with Gus, a hard-as-steel toughie with an unexplained Australian accent, and what follows is the type of aimless, awkward action film on which director Pyun (*Captain America, Dollman*) has built a decades-long career.

Though this movie isn't noted for its literary references, it's worth mentioning that Wanda's tongue-twisting last name is borrowed from a male character in Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Even more unlikely is the fact that *Alien from L.A.* spawned a sequel that featured several of the same Atlantean characters, lifted its title from Verne's novel, and was an even greater strike against humanity. (*ZC*)

ALIEN SPACE AVENGER

Dir. Richard W. Haines / 1989

A sci-fi-fueled superhero tale with an overdose of severed limbs.

The writer/director of *Class of Nuke 'Em High* was behind this unnecessarily entertaining VHS goonride, which kicks off in the 1930s as two rough-and-tumble fellas and their dames are taken over by parasitic alien criminals. After killing the veterans at the local legion hall, they bury themselves in their spaceship to dodge the intergalactic police force. The quartet reemerges 50 years later in New York City, where they immediately see a gay punk couple walking through Greenwich Village: "These creatures got *much* stranger!" While on a weapons hunt, they attempt to fire an enormous dildo like a shotgun and punch out a drug dealer because he has no uranium.

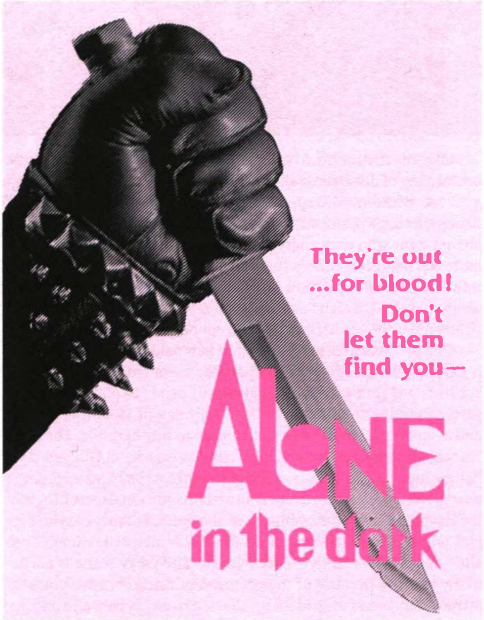
Cut to a comic book artist having sex with his girlfriend (the scene which places this film in the science fiction category). He's Matt, the chronicler of low-sales pulp hero Space Avenger. When not fretting over flagging newsstand sales, he hangs out at the local new wave club, and it's only a matter of time before the starborne criminals appear, armed and ready for violence. But the lawkeepers of the universe are still on their tails, and Matt is soon drafted in the war against the lowlifes, becoming the Alien Space Avenger himself.

Somehow, it all works. Director Haines clearly has a genuine affection for the raucous innocence of middle-wave drive-in trash, and it manages to shine through all the movie's gore and cleavage. Speaking of which, hideous, classic porn star Jamie Gillis puts in a cameo as the schlub businessman who gets melted wang-first by one of the overheated alien girls. The lead villain is played by underused ham Robert Prichard, who made his memorable debut as über-bully Slug in the first *Toxic Avenger* film. (*ZC*)

ALONE IN THE DARK

Dir. Jack Sholder / 1982

Four delusional maniacs escape a mental institution to deal out bloody retribution for an imagined murder.



Jack Palance leads (and steals) the show as Frank Hawkes, a violent, schizophrenic ex-G.I. and patient at Valley Hills Hospital. Convinced that the new doctor (Dwight Schultz) is a killer, Hawkes rallies firebug Martin Landau, obese child-eater Erland van Lidth and a bonus mystery nut together to break free and attack. Most of the action takes place in the doc's barricaded house as the four crazies assault his family from all sides.

This film's casting agent should be rewarded with a solid-gold Cadillac. Donald Pleasence appears severely medicated as hospital head Dr. Leo Bain, mumbling through his scenes and bumping into furniture, but still manages to exhibit his wide-eyed, desperate charm. And the uncharacteristically spastic Landau's brain-damaged opening dream sequence is like a birthday party for your eyeballs. Even the wuss doctor is a lowbrow celebrity, played by none other than Animal from *The A-Team*!

As things are just starting to heat up, the family's punkish sister-in-law decides to head down to the local night spot to take in a performance by The Sic Fucks, who play an endless version of their "Chop Up Your Mother" while waving giant cardboard axes over the spiky heads of the colorful '80s pogo trash crowd. The 'Fucks are more cabaret than rock, with props, back-up singers and a frontman who sounds like a post-pubescent Grover. Writer/director Sholder was so off the punk mark that he ended right on target, as later bands like (ugh) Gwar and (ugh ugh) Green Jello should be mailing him royalty checks for the gory puppet show schtick pioneered here.

Another monumental punk moment occurs when a new wave teen ditz goes inexplicably sweet on the blood-soaked 63-year-old Palance outside the club. But, despite its heavy doses of homicidal lunatics and hideous haircuts, the nuttiest thing about this movie is the fact that The Sic Fucks were an actual New York band who pulled off some legendarily outrageous stage shows. Consisting of wackily-clad members with names like Bob Hopeless and Dick String, the band was one of the East Coast's more rock 'n' roll answer to The Dickies. But antics and *Alone in the Dark* sadly weren't enough to properly immortalize them, and they ended up moving onto more glamorous musical projects like Dayglo Abortions. Ugh ugh ugh. (*ZC*)

AMERICAN DRIVE-IN

Dir. Krishna Shah / 1985

Various oddball characters enjoy a summer night at the drive-in until a ruthless gang starts causing trouble.

Crazy jokes, nudity and awkwardly serious moments abound throughout this beautiful mess. It takes place entirely at a drive-in theater. Characters come and go as they please in what feels like real time. The gang of brats features a punk in a red coat, a greaser wearing a dog collar and a dude in a flannel. The first scene of the film features them shouting that they want to "see some beaver" as they chase a couple in a van. Funny. Later on, they attempt to perform a gang rape. Not so funny. A fat family brings a table of food to the movie and there's a montage of them pigging out. Very very funny. There are constant uncomfortable jokes about a dude trying to get a blowjob. The not-entirely-punk gang is called on their shit and one would expect everything to end on a wacky just-desserts finish, but instead they're forced to fight each other to the death in front of the bloodthirsty audience.

The film playing on the drive-in screen is a massively underbaked musical horror epic that was initially filmed in wee chunks as background fodder for this production. However, director Shah quickly returned to the project and padded it out with a zany Hitler domination plot and several scenes of corpses performing shredding ditties, and released that movie to theaters as *Hard Rock Zombies* the same year. (*BC*)

AMERICAN FLYERS

Dir. John Badham / 1985

Two brothers bond through bicycle racing.

This film really packs in the competition, love, death, action and, of course, Rae Dawn Chong. Even with all the life lessons stuffed into the movie, the most impressive feat is that the filmmakers captured Kevin Costner on celluloid while he still had a pulse. For a sports movie, *American Flyers* delivers, running along at a brisk pace and always keeping the sparks flying, sometimes at the cost of coherence, but who cares? We just gotta see that underdog win in the end.

Marcus Sommers (Costner) is estranged from his family; his brother, David (David Grant) stuck around to take care of mom after dad passed away from a brain hemorrhage. Marcus is the ambitious one in the Sommers clan, and has resentment for the way David has passed up opportunities to shine by using their widowed mother as an excuse for any lack of ambition. The wayward son returns to breathe life into his relationship with David, and to give him some direction in life. Movies have taught us that the best way to set someone straight, the be-all end-all cure for any directionless loafer, is sports. Road trips help a lot, too. So, Marcus and David take a road trip with Chong to a massive, grueling bicycle race in Colorado entitled "Hell of the West" and learn some valuable lessons along the way about life and love.

The plot progresses as expected, with sibling rivalry erupting between the brothers as the past is exhumed. Triumph and bittersweet uplift are just around the corner as well. All the clichés are trotted out, but there is a sincerity and passion that dampens the shopworn plot devices. The success of the film is also aided by *American Flyers'* stellar supporting cast: John Amos plays a health nut with an underachieving chubbins for a son; Jennifer Grey is a hysterical goof; and Robert Townsend is the ubiquitous black buddy.

Even with its sturdy construction, the film has one amusing and detrimental fault: the product placement is extremely distracting, as a certain fast food chain takes a supporting role in the film. Not content to merely show its product prominently within the movie, Satan's favorite restaurant figures into the script with a presence so glaring you may clog an artery just from staring at the screen. The personification of said chain's disregard for health or subtlety is an ex-hippie who defects from her flaky vegetarian friends, who are just eating "store-bought nuts," to a new land of crass consumerism and free choice, i.e. a fast food restaurant in which she orders some name-brand flesh.

A film that is funded by a corporation whose profits depend on death and willful ignorance reduces the punk moment in this film to a fleeting and insignificant head shot of wacky hairdos: one spiky red number and the other a skunky streaked barber crime. While the film is low on the punk meter, it is very high on the inspiration and free-market economy chart. (*SC*)

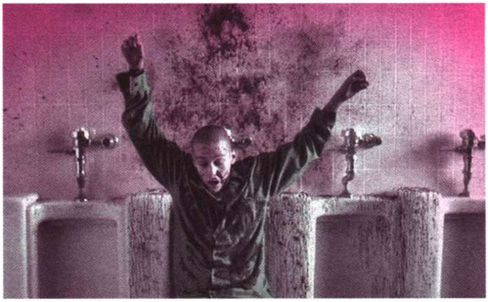
AMERICAN HISTORY X

Dir. Tony Kaye / 1998

A white-power figurehead must face up to the consequences of his lifestyle and its effect on his family.

Many films about racism, especially those produced within the Hollywood system, rely on generalizations and one-dimensional types in order to hammer the "racism is bad" message into the audience's brains. This leaves little room for nuance and complexities. *American History X* is not completely unsuccessful in its bid for a better understanding of the seething rage that infuses much of the racial climate, but it does rely on those symbolic and uncomplicated figures that lend themselves to a clean and easy message.

The Edward Norton character, Derek Vinyard, is certainly the most complicated and, as the film progresses, we watch his growth and transforming ideals. Vinyard is magnetic as a skinhead icon; the rallying diatribes he delivers are the most relevant aspect of the film, and are strikingly reminiscent of much of the bile spewed by right wing talk-radio hosts and pundits. The nature vs. nurture debate is the cornerstone of most of Vinyard's monologues, in that environment and social status are completely ignored, making personal responsibility the sole factor in an individual's behavior. This sort of reductive thinking goes for the heart, not the head, and in some ways, the film itself resorts to these tactics. In explaining the seed of Derek's racial hate, we have a simple family dinner in which the father extols the virtues of questioning the laziness of blacks. Also, Derek learns to love black people by befriending a wacky fellow inmate who happens to be black, and also happens to be the comic relief. The overblown soundtrack swells in order to cue the appropriate emotion in the audience. Along with the score, the viewer's eyes are assaulted with an overabundance of American flag imagery, perhaps as an ironic gesture; a little elbow nudge that tells us, "America ain't perfect, son."



Like most American social injustice, the culprit behind the brutal gang of disaffected skinheads in *American History X* is a craggy-faced white male, represented by Cameron Alexander (Stacy Keach). Keach's performance is subtle and insidious; he's a manipulative tyrant who uses angry youth as a means for spreading racial hate. His character makes the film a little more interesting, as his influence raises a question of whether this gang would exist if he weren't around, which takes some blame away from the misguided youth and brings us back to the concept of nature vs. nurture.

One of Alexander's tactics to lure new soldiers for his skin army is hardcore punk, as we see in a party scene at his house. He allows substandard (but extremely aggressive) bands to play in his backyard, whipping the lunkheads into a frenzy of violent slamming and skanking, all in the name of the Aryan brotherhood. For some reason, the guitarist for one skin band is wearing a Gilligan-style fishing hat, which diffuses much of the threat the band might have posed. Nonetheless, hardcore is an actual traditional recruiting tool for the white-power movement, as the genre is fairly easy to play and immediately strikes a chord in disenfranchised, unemployed and—most importantly—bored youth. The party scene is particularly truthful because of the tradition of using abrasive music to attract youngsters to an ideology that is extremely base and uncomplicated. The scenes of violence, including the show at Alexander's compound, are effective in displaying the sheer uncaring brutality of these blank teens, and in these moments, the film is successful. The skinheads' raid of a grocery store, the subsequent degradation and violation of the employees, and the bookend scenes of Derek's treatment of a few black carjackers are striking. The film is sporadically effective, mostly in its scenes of jarring and shocking violence and when Derek blares one of his hate-filled monologues. However, when the blatant message of "racism BAD" occurs in the film, it begins to flounder and loses some of its truth. (*SC*)

AMERICAN POP

Dir. Ralph Bakshi / 1981

An animated epic follows four generations of a family through their relationship to the pop music of their respective eras.

Bakshi's musical masterpiece starts in Czarist Russia with a boy named Zalmie, who escapes to America and starts passing out chorus slips for a penny in rollicking Prohibition nightclubs. He's succeeded by a son, Benny, who complacently marries into a powerful mob family and spends his nights playing piano in all-black clubs, an act his father mistakes for a lack of ambition. Benny dies overseas after enlisting in WWII, but leaves his harmonica to his own young son Tony, a cynical hipster who runs away from home to become a successful counterculture songwriter before getting embroiled in heroin addiction and codependent relationships. Tony's son Pete, the product of a one-night stand with an innocent girl in rural Kansas, seeks out Tony, only to be trained in the art of drug-dealing (and, inadvertently, songwriting) before Tony abandons him. All these men have had their hard knocks, but Pete is perhaps the worst off of all. Nevertheless, he's the one who decides to take his love of the music to the next level, to get out of the gutters and make something of himself.

The musical landscape Pete saunters through consists of Pat Benatar and the Sex Pistols. A cover of the latter's "Pretty Vacant" is matched with surreal visuals that act as a grotesque, exaggerated caricature of punk rock: broken windows, oversized electrical outlets, razorblades, safety pins and pinball games, disembodied fishnet legs and a plethora of pogoing pink-and-blue haired dropouts who buy heroin from the jaded, jive-walking Pete. Eventually Pete tires of playing candyman to other successful musicians and holds his coke for ransom until someone will listen to his songs. But, despite his environment, punk doesn't inform Pete's songwriting; his debut hit is a rendition of Bob Seger's "Night Moves."

The voicework in this film is incredible, especially Ron Thompson as Tony and Marya Small as his Janis Joplin-esque muse Frankie; it's rare to have so much nuance and genuine emotion come through animated film. Also featured in bit parts are the voices of character actors Vincent Schiavelli as the theater owner, Richard Moll as a beatnik poet and Fear member Philo Cramer as "Punk Guitarist." (*KJ*)

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

Dir. John Landis / 1981

A pair of tourists is attacked by a werewolf and the survivor unwittingly unleashes his lycanthropic curse on London.

David (David Naughton) and Jack (Griffin Dunne) are a couple of carefree Americans backpacking across the English moors. On one stormy night, they end up at a pub called The Slaughtered Lamb where the patrons are none too friendly (look carefully, one of the lads playing chess is none other than Rik Mayall of *The Young Ones*). The two are eventually chased out of the bar and find themselves wandering the spooky countryside when suddenly, werewolf attack! Jack is killed (sort of), the werewolf is exterminated and David wakes up in the hospital wondering what the hell happened. He's plagued by nightmares (and nightmares within nightmares) and visited by the decaying spirit of his dead friend. David also meets a kind nurse named Alex (the always engaging Jenny Agutter). The two hit it off and she invites him to share her flat and, eventually, her shower. David and Alex take the Underground to her place and, while on the subway, David dorks it up and makes funny faces at a group of young punks, who look refreshingly like the real deal with their mohawks, leopard-spotted hair, snotty noses, spikes and pimples, and who probably walked right off King's Road. Before long, the moon is full and bright and you know what that means: a long, painful, Academy Award-winning transformation where David gets mean'n' hairy and starts killing. It all ends up in a messy showdown in Piccadilly Circus, where the wolf's carnage is nearly matched by a multi-car collision.

1981 was a super-bonanza year for werewolf cinema: it featured Joe Dante's *The Howling*, the so-so *Wolfen* and this film, John Landis' follow-up to his smash hit *The Blues Brothers*. *An American Werewolf in London* was the only one I managed to see, and it was a pretty intense experience for 12-year-old me. My friend nearly had a heart attack. Many have remarked about *American Werewolf*'s effective blend of humor and horror. The film's tone is reminiscent of Howard Hawks' ability to find comedy and amusing characterizations in the most brutal circumstances. This achievement results in stronger characters (aided by a sympathetic cast, particularly Agutter and Dunne) and the film is able to earn its laughs and scares, resulting in a movie that holds up well 25 years later. (*SH*)

AMY

Dir. Nadia Tass / 1998

An overwrought Australian drama concerning a mute girl who learns to communicate through song.

Traumatized by witnessing her rock star father's onstage electrocution in front of his marginally subcultural fanbase, Amy acts semi-catatonic and barely responds to her emotionally-shipwrecked mother. It takes a down-and-out songwriting neighbor to bring both of them out of their misery. As expected, everyone learns the true meaning of friendship, including a wife-beating alcoholic who's pummeled in an alley by two greaseball punks. The only redeeming moment is when a policeman sings about how he loves to eat hamburgers. Avoid at all costs, unless you're inspired by watching anguished people fall to their knees and weep in the rain, in which case I will avoid you at all costs. (*ZC*)

ANARCHISM IN AMERICA

Dirs. Steven Fischler & Joel Sucher / 1983

A documentary adventure of three young, well-read dissenters searching for anarchy on the American road.

A general history of anarchism is laid out while the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the UK" plays in the background. The filmmakers' narration openly admits their lack of comprehensive knowledge on their subject, and they set out in an RV to investigate the movement and its most active participants, past and present. Activist leaders and exiled political figures are interviewed, with footage of founding revolutionary Emma Goldman thrown in for good measure. Towards the end of the film, the Dead Kennedys are shown performing "California Uber Alles" to a rapt crowd of hometown fans. Afterwards, bassist Klaus Flouride and guitarist East Bay Ray sit silently as frontman/mouthpiece Jello Biafra is interviewed on the nature of anarchy, stating that no considerable changes will be made until "we're all long dead." (*ZC*)

ANARCHY IN JAPAN-SUKE

Dir. Takahisa Zeze / 1999

An amoral lady meets a horny male. Gross antics ensue.

Because of Japan's strict No Genitals onscreen limitation, *pinkus* (Japanese softcore features known by Westerners as "pink films") are forced to be creative with their exploitations of the human body. This picture makes up for the lack of visible bathing suit areas by blazing over the top with fetishes. The central female character is raped by a man with greasy, floppy hair and shaved temples. His personal severity is expressed via the locked chain around his neck and the Exploited album hanging on the bedroom wall. She complains that she can't have any babies due to his violent sexual tactics. He finds this very funny. Horrible abuse, potty humor and a complete lack of humanity make this a tragic, hateful film. I'm not sure whether to laugh or cry during the multiple scenes featuring a man who purposefully poops in his adult diaper and forces a woman to change him, so I'll just choose the third option: being incredibly bored. (*BC*)

ANGEL

Dir. Robert Vincent O'Neill / 1984

A teenage prostitute is forced to battle a serial killer.

LA's dark alleys have gotten more than their share of screen time. With the great wave of '70s sexploitation came countless chronicles of the "working girl" walking the shadows of the City of Angels. But few of them carried any real force, opting to showcase the steamier side of the profession, until this popular teen hooker film helped bring a more tragic, genuine face to the genre.

Donna Wilkes plays 15-year-old high school student Molly Stewart. She studies hard, gets good grades and pays her rent by picking up johns. As "Angel," her best friends are other prostitutes, including a middle-aged transvestite named Mae (Dick Shawn). Mae anchors the grim tone of the film with some modest comic relief. She licks an angry man's nose, and when she bumps into a cherry-coiffed denim punk, she exclaims, "Goddamn freaks!" The same punk shows up in other shots, as does a guy with a blue mohawk who seems suspiciously tight with the local police. The girls' Hollywood Blvd. father figure is retired cowboy Kit Carson (Rory Calhoun), who waves his pistols for the tourists and tips his wide-brimmed hat to the young streetwalkers in a sincere, gentlemanly gesture. A cop named Andrews (Cliff Gorman) watches out for Molly, aware of her age and situation and desperately hoping to see her rise above it.

Molly is also cared for by her new wave lesbian landlord Solly, played by the great Susan Tyrrell with her reliably overdriven zeal. Solly's a postmodern painter, which explains her crazily drawn-on eyebrows. While the teen is at school, Solly and Mae whittle the time away cheating each other at card games and slinging homophobic insults across the table. But at night, Molly is out on the town and making her living, despite stories of a "bisexual, impotent necro" who's been killing hookers.

When the rumors turn out to be true, Molly arms herself with a pistol and continues unabated. She runs across three taunting jock classmates (one of whom is played by *The Last American Virgin*'s Joe Rubbo), who demand to see her "whisker biscuit" until she makes one piss his jeans at gunpoint. Things ramp up and the murderer's spree intensifies as Molly's closest friends begin showing up in the morgue.

The killer is played with unnerving perfection by second-string actor John Diehl, putting everything he's got into his first major non-comic role. Scenes of him simply staring at a wall should have ensured him a long career as a high-priced Hollywood heavy. Also, Calhoun's portrayal of displaced Golden Age cowboy Carson is unbelievably strong, and the engrossing friendship between him and Molly is just one of many high points in the film. Solly and Mae's repartee is equally captivating, even when things turn tragic: "You can't die...you owe me $147, you fucking faggot!" In fact, every character is rounded and well-drawn in a way rarely seen in award-winning dramas, much less late-night masterpieces wrongly relegated to video-shop porn sections.

Despite its lurid poster art and widespread popularity among "blue" movie fans, *Angel* is as unerotic as a movie gets. Writer/director O'Neill had scripted the incredible, savage hooker epic *Vice Squad* two years earlier, which portrayed an even darker vision of Los Angeles night life. In his harsh, believable takes on the sex industry, the Hollywood streets are populated solely by cops, dope fiends and sadists, and romance has breathed its last. (*ZC*)

ANGEL MINE

Dir. David Blyth / 1978

An unhappily married couple indulges in ineffective fantasies.

This hour-long art epic of domestic sexual frustration kicks off with a beach scene of a naked woman sitting on an outdoor toilet. A sailor rises out of the waves and straps a bra on her. This is our introduction to *Angel Mine's* central characters, a painfully comfortable, unnamed man'n' wife incapable of achieving any level of pleasure. In their quest, they watch porn, engage in surgical roleplay, devise imaginary homosexual superheroes and mow the lawn in a black cowl. These fixations on fruitless, erotic targets naturally lead nowhere. The husband's most consistent voyeuristic indulgence is a grainy video of a futuristic new wave couple locked in an awkward, choreographed standoff. These two proto-mutant night rocker types are played by the same actors portraying the wedded losers. Later, they break into the pair's middle-class home to sloppily devour a roast chicken and murder their more complacent, dead-eyed selves. Afterwards, they tear off each other's clothes and engage in primal sex. An early New Zealand punk cinema offering from director Blyth, who would later helm the equally jarring new wave paranoia film *Death Warmed Up*. (*ZC*)

ANGUISH

Dir. Bigas Luna / 1987

A killing within a knifing within a butchering.

Zelda "Little Z" Rubinstein of *Poltergeist* fame stars in this complex slasher opus as a sadistic mother who controls her adult son (Michael Lerner) via hypnosis. Powerless under her gaze, he murders anyone she disapproves of. Where this simple premise could already be enough for a compelling frightshow, the film soon careens off on an entirely different tangent where a psychopath holds the fate of an unwitting movie audience in his trembling hands. Among the viewers is a young, pale-faced female punk who is best seen bursting out of the theater toward the story's climax. Almost every moment in the film is an unexpected turn, and these endless surprises make it impossible to describe *Anguish* without ruining the plot. This underseen multi-octave ode to homicide is the Rubik's Cube of '80s horror cinema. (*ZC*)

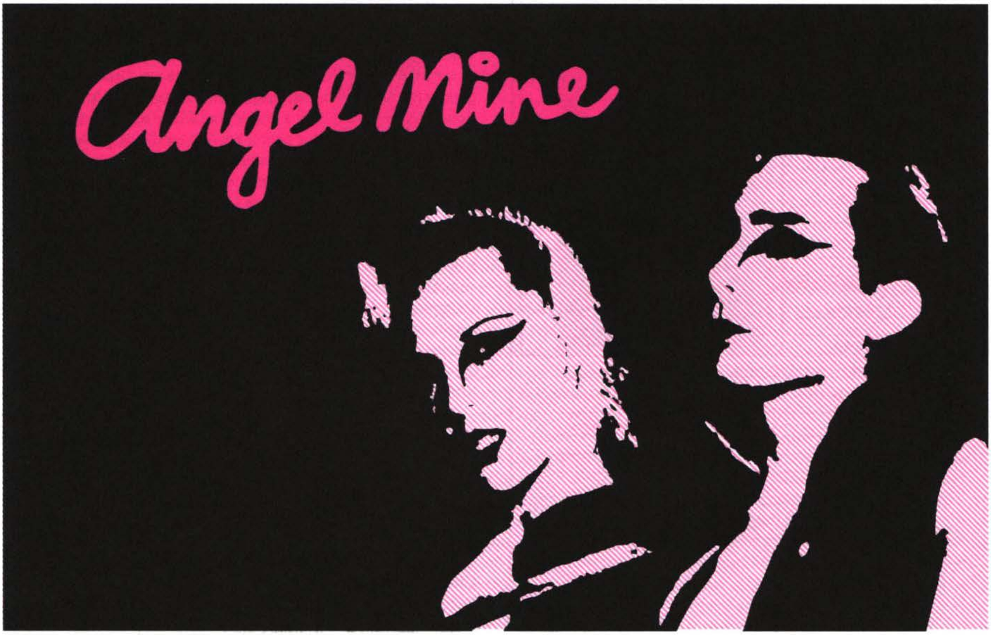
ANIMAL ROOM

Dir. Craig Singer / 1995

Grunge-era youths lazily spiral out of control.

A crew of impotent shit-starters smoke, swear and terrorize other 28-year-old teenagers. Most of this gang appear to have just snuck into a Blind Melon concert, while their de facto leader Doug (Matthew Lillard) wears hoop earrings and dresses like the manager of a 1970s Chinese restaurant. This incredibly non-intimidating crew rules their graffitied high school hallways and classrooms, taking special interest in a bald classmate who's later seen running a recording session for the late '90s incarnation of the Misfits. The group's rightfully temporary vocalist Michale Graves is even given a line of dialogue to flub.

Animal Room is a brutally unnecessary entry in the already worthless Teen Indie Drama genre. The film's influences are made all the more transparent by the monumentally embarrassing tagline on the video cover: "Echoing Alarms of *Clockwork Orange*." In all fairness, Neil Patrick Harris puts in a strong performance as a bullied innocent, especially considering that playing the frightened victim to Matthew Lillard is like losing a beauty contest to Rhea Perlman. (*ZC*)



ANOTHER STATE OF MIND

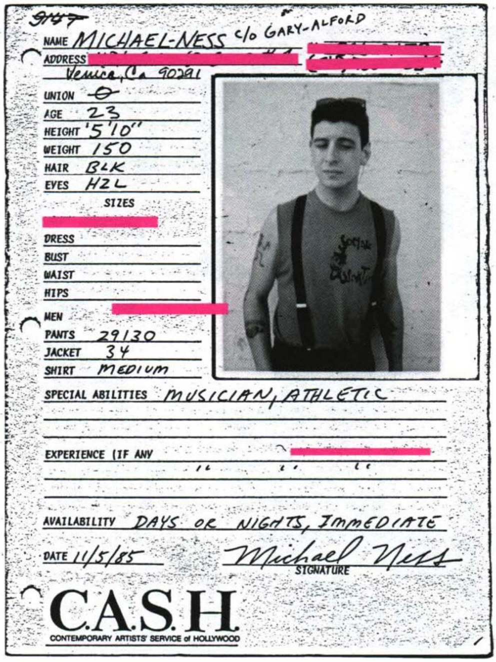
Dirs. Adam Small & Peter Stuart / 1984

The ultimate punk tour document.

"Punk is misunderstood," opens Shawn Stern of Better Youth Organization, who then succinctly lays out what the movement means and its origins in teenage frustration. He also announces that his band Youth Brigade has purchased a bus to cross the nation on a full-scale tour with Social Distortion. Stern's optimism and drive are a powerful force, and he anticipates that the outing can serve a major purpose in the punk scene. The other 2/3 of Youth Brigade is composed of additional Stern siblings Mark and Adam, who are noticeably softer-spoken than their crusading brother. At the time, Social Distortion was only a few years in, and the 30-city trek was to be their first tour.

The road crew and band members introduce themselves and the school bus hits the highway. First stop is San Francisco, where SD frontman Mike Ness explains the emotional impact of his smeared mascara while preparing for their set. The show goes well, but the bands leave with a mere 40 bucks, partially paid in rolls of pennies.

The bus crosses over into Calgary and the travelers are treated to a boisterous family-style chili feast. Canada's punks state they're at war with their fellow townsfolk, and tell stories of the threats and resistance they've endured in the name of maintaining their scene. The crowd in Winnipeg is the most enthused yet, filling a large venue and piling against one another in a steaming whirlpool. Montreal street punk Manon tells her story in charmingly stunted English: "I used to beg and snatch purses and beat up faggots with some friends of mine, just to get something to eat, you know?" Leather-clad, brain-damaged accident victim Marcel adds, "I am going to die in two years so I hope that everyone comes to my funeral...I'll die because life is not amusement for me." The Montreal show itself is hampered by foul weather; the bands leave without their guarantee and the waitress at the all-night diner won't even take the bands' orders due to their appearance. When they try to catch her attention, she calls the police and the boys are evicted from the restaurant.



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ADDRESS [redacted] [redacted]
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C.A.S.H.
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' SERVICE of HOLLYWOOD

Things look grim, but by the time they reach Chicago, faith is renewed and energy has returned. This shift is the first strong representation of the incessant ebb and flow of the tour's success and the participants' sanity. Members of the crew start to desert via Greyhound buses in week three, after the school bus' umpteenth breakdown. While awaiting repairs in D.C., the bands head to the legendary Dischord House in time to catch a Minor Threat practice set. There's a truly righteous straight-edge rant from the movement's venerable founding father Ian MacKaye, interspersed with footage of him scooping ice cream at his Häagen-Dazs day job. Though the East Coast shows are incredible, Social Distortion just isn't prepared for the rigors of the road and they vacate, leaving singer Ness behind in despondent frustration. With one final bus breakdown just days from LA, the tour ends and the remaining soldiers return home by any possible means. Stern admits that the tour was a failure by financial definition, but his closing interview is so rich with inspired optimism that the success of his flawed mission is undeniable.

As in *The Decline of Western Civilization*, several scene youths are interviewed about their personal experiences, drives and the importance of maintaining a confrontational fashion aesthetic. Even Circle Jerk/former Black Flag frontman Keith Morris chimes in. A show-going enthusiast demonstrates crucial slam pit tactics. Conscientious LA teens are seen at a diving pool where they practice the best methods to avoid injuring people while stage diving. In the same city, a bizarre Christian halfway house for born-again punks is shown, where a formally dressed pastor explains that the extreme visual nature of punk is clearly just an expression of Satan's palette, and the loud music "does nothing to bring glory to God." This footage of a room full of mohawked teens singing along with a clunky Psalm may be the most depressing segment in any documentary made about something other than the Holocaust. Strangely enough, this Bible-thumping punk haven—named The Wig Factory after the building's original use—was co-founded by former street hardcore icon John Macias of Santa Monica hardcore group Circle One. Fortunately, a great deal more non-Christian punks voice their stances, bringing the film away from the Lord and back to solid, reasonable ground.

Filmmakers Small and Stuart weren't exactly punks themselves, but were high school friends with the Stern Brothers and decided to follow the tour in a rented cargo truck. Everything was shot with two cameras on 3/4" video. Once the film was completed, porn company Coastline Pictures shelled out the $20,000 for the blow-up to 16mm, and print ads marketed hardcore sex films along with the doc. Named for a Social Distortion song partly written over the course of the tour, *Another State of Mind* debuted at LA's Beverly Cinema, where Tony Cadena of the Adolescents assaulted the projector and ruined the screening; a perfect clincher to one of the most epic struggles in documented punk history. *(ZC)*

IAN MacKAYE

Vocalist – FUGAZI; Self – *ANOTHER STATE OF MIND*

IM: What's extremely interesting is if you were to say to me, "Have you seen"—whatever the blockbuster is—"have you seen *Batman* yet?" It's assumed that of course we're all gonna see it, so then the only question is *when* are you going to see it? But then, if I was to run to you and say, "Have you read that new Danielle Steele book yet?" You'd go, "*What?!* What the fuck? Why would I be reading that?"

The thing is, I love movies. As a kid I made movies, I was obsessed with acting and I really appreciate solid cinema. I'm into it, but I felt like most of the punk representation in Hollywood was so absurd and missed the point. I think when I turned the radio off in 1979 I pretty much turned Hollywood off too, for the most part. I just stopped paying attention and that's why I think Fugazi has never given any music to movies: because it seemed so stupid and disrespectful to the music.

But, don't get me wrong, I am a fan of the form and there are some really, really well-made movies. But, as an industry, deeply fucked up and wasteful. And it's the only industry I know of in the world that spends untold millions of dollars on just wastefulness in creating a product that they then spend millions and millions of dollars to advertise and hoist upon the public and then they have an awards ceremony where they congratulate themselves for putting it out and everybody in the world tunes in. And that's the only thing, as a punk rock band, you can play against The Super Bowl, but you cannot play against the Oscars and that's just fucked.

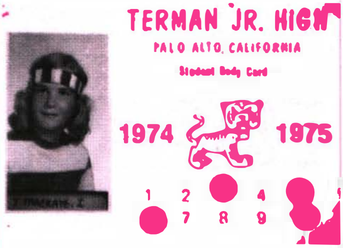
DAM: Everyone else that I'm talking to for the most part is a member of the industry. You're obviously aggressively detached from that.

Well, not exactly because I worked with Jem Cohen and I support independent filmmaking.

But you're not part of the narrative filmmaking thing where everyone's being nice to each other in the hopes that they're gonna further their career.

Right. I don't give a fuck about that.

What are some of the better or worse depictions of punks that you've seen?



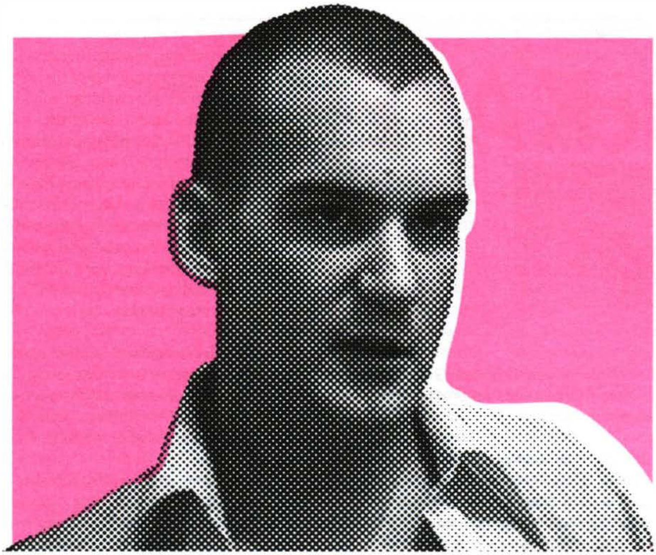
It just seems in most movies, punks are portrayed as these hyper nihilists with ridiculous self-destructive behaviors; like they're crushing beer cans on their heads or frat boy crap, but with spiky hair or a shaved head or a mohawk. It just has to do with this deeply confused impression that straight society has about punk rock, and this largely has to do with what has traction in our media, and that's violence and sex and sensationalism. So, those are the kind of cartoony elements of punk rock that often are central identifiers in terms of punk rock characters in film. And a lot of times, people who are actually punks will collaborate with this because they think it's funny or ironic, but ultimately, it just reinforces this nonsense, and I think that from my point of view, punk rock is the free space, and that's where the new ideas were, are and will be presented because profit isn't dictating every step of the way.

So, in my mind, what was happening for instance in the early '80s with the hardcore bands like Black Flag and Minor Threat and Dead Kennedys and all that craziness, it sort of set the cadence for the ideas about punk rock and the representation of punk rock in the media. But most people I knew were really thoughtful, brilliant, creative, loving people, and the representation that you see in movies is usually quite the opposite.

You have these documentaries that did their best to capture what was really going on, and then alternately, you have the narrative films with this really garish subhuman version of what that subculture was.

A lot of times, the documentaries are put through a major distribution. They're often tweaked. That *American Hardcore* movie—I know the guys who made that movie, I'm in the movie—but my analogy for that movie is it's like watching people fuck through a keyhole. It's titillating, but it's not even close to what was actually happening. It was just taking a specific perspective on it, and in that case it was really about the kind of violence and aggression that the two filmmakers were so drawn to. I don't think they were actually in a band. The aspect of the sensationalism—if you look at the people being interviewed, they're all like, "Yeah, we were crazy! That shit was nuts. We beat the fuck outta that guy! This guy threw a fuckin' bag of vomit at me!" It was like all this war-story kind of component. Even in documentaries, I think people, once you put a camera on them, they just can't help but say some stupid shit. And even if they did say something that wasn't stupid, you know how it works with editing. Those people who were interviewed said a lot more than was in those movies; I can certainly tell you that I did. And I come off fairly reasonable in that thing compared to some of the other people.

This is a sideline, but documentaries have become altered. They've shifted into a narrative form that has a narrative arc, so then it's not a documentary anymore… they create this fiction in a way. Because you have narration, you have someone setting a scene and then you have supporting footage. It's come a long way from even *Another State of Mind*, which was also illusionary, and they put a narrative arc on



it too. But, even that, because it was being filmed at the time, people were not quite as self-conscious about what they were doing as being punk. They weren't talking about being punks: they were *being* punks. It's just something I've noticed.

I don't know anybody who's in any, for lack of a better work, subculture that, when faced with representation in a fictional form of media, is going to be comfortable. Because there are always these weird amalgams. Like even some movie characters that were allegedly based on me are absurd. When I saw them, I was like, how is that based on me? They obviously don't know me at all.

So, you mentioned *Another State of Mind* and how even that had some manufacturing going on?

When you watch the film, it's kind of obvious because there are all these establishing shots interviewing Shawn sort of placed throughout the film, and they were shot after the tour is over. His hair is longer and he tries to keep his tenses in place like, "I guess we're going to be going here now."

They didn't end up in Washington. They make it seem like they left the van in Washington and that's not what happened. They made it back to Texas, I think.

So, did you know when they said they wanted to do a show with you guys that they were going to be coming along with a crew?

Yeah, we knew they were traveling with a camera crew. It was just way more convoluted than that. I mean, they arrived in town broken down and they ended up having their school bus towed up to Cynthia Connolly's, who I was going out with at the time. She and her sister lived up with their mom up in this fairly well-to-do neighborhood, and they towed the bus up there and there were like 12 of them crashing at the house and Cynthia's mother was not excited by this. So, we ended up getting everything transferred down to the Dischord House, so they ended up staying here.

I had no problem with the camera crew. I think the first show we did with them was in Baltimore, but they'd come to Washington first and then we went up to Baltimore and that's the footage that you see of Minor Threat, where I guess the PA goes out or something. And then the interview with me, the reason that I'm so hoarse is because I did the show the night before with no PA. I think they filmed me at Häagen-Dazs too. But I actually haven't seen that movie in many years.

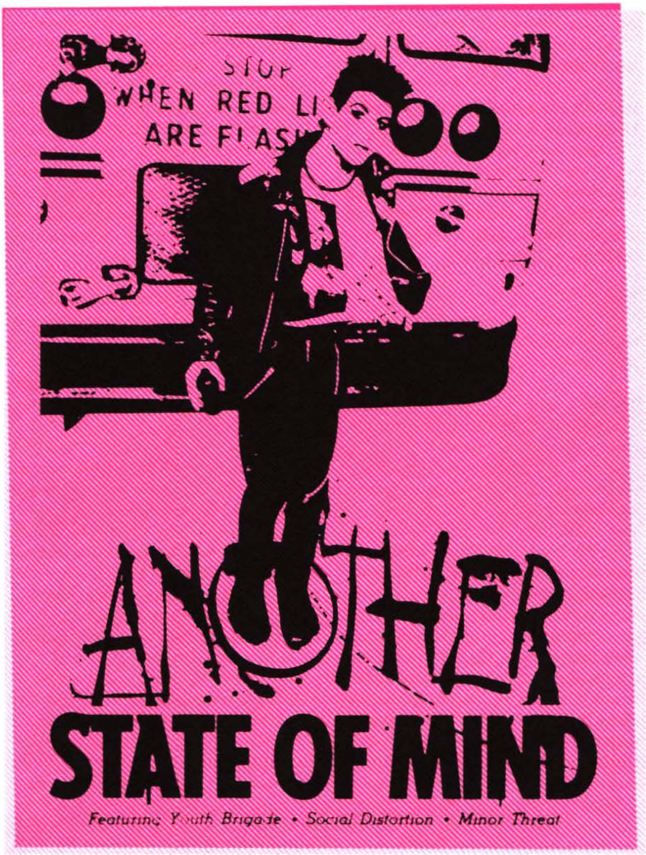
I'm a little irritated because, like everybody else in that movie, we had to sign a contract and were paid a dollar. We couldn't have been less film business savvy; we just thought they were some kids filming. And then the guys who made it used that footage of the Dischord House and gave it to the *Ripley's Believe it or Not* television show. They're talking about weird hairdos and suddenly they showed a guy who was living here giving someone a mohawk on our front porch. So they were selling their footage around.

And it really bugs me that they obviously filmed a lot—they were running video all the time—so there's all this outtake stuff and nobody knows where it is. I tried to get a hold of the Minor Threat stuff and the Dischord stuff because I was working on a DVD and I thought it'd be perfect, but whoever was distributing it went out of business, it went up for auction and I think Shawn and his brother were bidding for it. But they got outbid by Mike Ness' management, so his company got a hold of it, the rumor being that there was like really unflattering footage of him in the outtakes—I don't know if that's true or not, but the DVD was released and you can see Minor Threat very prominently included in the advertising. Actually, I think it's arguable that Minor Threat is one of the main selling points of that thing. That footage is pretty legendary, at least for people who know the movie. But, no one ever sent one, so I had to go out and buy my own copy of the DVD. It's just weird. I don't think I should be paid, I don't want money, but I want a little fucking respect, that's all.

But that movie, for instance, is also like teaching people how to slamdance; that's just absurd. The kid practicing stage diving in the swimming pool? It's hilarious, but it's ridiculous. Let's put it this way: in my world that shit has never happened. Now, maybe that's what they do out there in LA, but not in Washington. We didn't practice slamdancing.

I don't think anyone believes that they did that in LA either.

I actually remember seeing that film when it came out and I was just appalled by it. But I thought the Minor Threat footage was pretty amazing. And I liked the French punks. There's that guy in the wheelchair who says [affects a philosophical French accent], "Life is not amusement for me." I love that guy, he was incredible. I knew a lot of the people in the movie because we were touring at the same time, so that was cool. But I hated the movie when I first saw it because it felt weird. I think it's like seeing your high school picture. But then I saw it again, maybe 10 or 12 years after it came out,


STOP
WHEN RED LI
ARE FLAS
ANOTHER
STATE OF MIND
Featuring Youth Brigade • Social Distortion • Minor Threat

and I loved it. I just laughed and laughed. It's just so crazy; the idea that it ever even happened. So to that degree, it's an incredible document, and I would say that it's a fairly representative piece of work.

So, despite its faults and despite their sleight of hand, as far as their interviewing goes, you think that it's overall worthwhile?

Sure. You have to remember that my kind of complaints about the kind of shift from actual documentary to narrative documentary, that's not a deal breaker as far as people's work, it just changes things. It makes you realize that it's a little bit of an illusion. And I'm interested in not being fooled. But I also understand that they were trying to figure out how best to go about doing it. Once DVD came out, it changed the nature of film in terms of the fact that it's not linear anymore and you have these extras. So you could have actually had explanatory information included in the overall package without having to insert it into the movie, thus rendering it fiction. But I'm just being a pain in the ass about that so ignore me. Having been there and having known those people, and it's been ten or 15 years since I saw it last, but I would say to my memory it's fairly accurate. And it really was me: that much I can assert.

I know The Dils were in *Up in Smoke* with Cheech and Chong and I remember that being kind of goofy but interesting.

Yeah, that's a really fun movie. You wouldn't expect Cheech and Chong to get really punk-heavy, but those scenes are pretty strong.

Definitely. And I guess Darby Crash is in a movie...he shows up in the crowd in *Rock 'n' Roll High School*. Actually I think that film did strange damage to the Ramones. You couldn't fuck with their first four albums, but then they kind of tipped their comic book hand. I think it really changed things.

That was one of the earlier widely seen films where punks were prominent...I mean, that was '79.

Actually, I was in The Teen Idles playing bass and we'd played a show opening for The Cramps before the D.C. premiere of *Rock 'n' Roll High School*. There was a guy who would have bands play before whenever he'd show a punk movie. And the Ramones were there signing autographs. Guy actually got their autograph, and maybe I got it too, I might have a signed single from them.

But you hated the movie even then?

Yeah, I thought it was dumb as hell. And I'm sensitive about this stuff because I actually don't think punk is a joke. And I feel like that's always the default: punk is a joke. Like punk rock is probably what got you working on this project. It's a good thing, not a joke. And it's not like you're sitting around picking your nose; you're working your ass off! Where'd that come from? Punk rock and industry—like in the true sense of the word industry—those things are fucking married together because punk rockers know that nobody else is gonna do it for them. The idea that a punk is this lazy guy picking his nose or sniffing glue or whatever is just absurd. Maybe it's just as well; maybe having that kind of representation is a little bit like having a totem pole or a gargoyle, just something that keeps the kooks out. The hippies got it bad too, I mean, my God.

Every culture got misrepresented. As soon as they were established then people would try to use them for the purpose of entertainment and they'd get it all wrong.

Right. So that's why I feel like it's part of a fine tradition. It really made me think about things like *Easy Rider*. That's probably a bunch of bullshit. Biker movies? My God.

Imagine what people in the hip-hop and breaking communities thought when they saw *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo*. It's all severely white people in garish spandex doing cartwheels.

Actually, there are these movies about go-go—D.C. funk music like Trouble Funk, Mass Extinction, Rare Essence—and it's been going on for 35 years. There's still go-go scenes going on to this day. They tried to break it wide open a couple of times. One go-go song called "'Da Butt" appeared in Spike Lee's movie *School Daze*. But they tried to do a movie here called *Good to Go*.

That was also called *Short Fuse*, I think. With Art Garfunkel?

Yeah, but it was called *Good to Go*.

It ended up being released on VHS as *Short Fuse*.

They changed the name of it?

It bombed so fucking hard in theaters that they changed the name for video release and repackaged it to look like a crime thriller.

[Laughs.] I saw that movie when it came out, because I thought, oh wow, it's gonna be go-go. And it's unbearably embarrassing and horrible. There's another go-go movie called *D.C. Cab* with Mr. T in it. And there's a scene where a junkyard band are playing on their buckets and that's pretty incredible. But that's go-go music. We were talking about *Another State of Mind*.

Wasn't it in Washington where they interview that goth girl who's doing all that black-and-white topless photography that's got nothing to do with anything?

That was in Baltimore. But, that was just a nude scene, right?

Yeah. It was totally gratuitous and confusing as to why it was even in there.

I knew her! That was ridiculous!

Yeah, it's got nothing to do with anything.

Actually, there's a detail of that movie that has driven me insane. They come to the Dischord House, right?

Yeah...

They come up the stairs. They focus in on a sign on our front door. And the sign says: "No Girls Allowed" or something.

Oh, that's right.

That fucking shot has been an unending headache for me because it's been used time and time again as evidence of our so-called deeply misogynistic scene here in Washington, which is fucking absurd. The thing about it was—we lived at the Dischord House. It was all boys who lived here, but boys and girls, all the punk kids hung out all the time. Because everyone was living at home still and it was an opportunity to get out of your house and come hang out here. We just watched television all the time, we watched *Little Rascals*. There's a scene in *Little Rascals* where they go to the clubhouse and they put a sign on the clubhouse that says "No Girls Allowed." So Eddie, as a joke, just scrawled that and pinned it to our front door, but there were like 12 of us watching the show—half of which were girls. But, like most things, what you put on a wall just disappears and becomes part of the scenery. So, I wasn't even thinking about that when they shot the movie, but during the early part of the so-called Riot Grrrl Era, there were definitely people who used that as "proof" of how sexist we were.

The thing about it is, if you watch the movie, you see the sign and then they come in the house and there's women sitting there in the house. We're all hanging out and talking, so it's obviously ridiculous. But that's an example of how powerful that medium is and how misrepresentative it can be. I don't think they intended to do that, but man...what a fucking headache.

After that happened, you guys managed to avoid being in other documentaries at that time. You've been musically active non-stop and there's been a lot of stuff they could have tracked you down for, so was that deliberate?

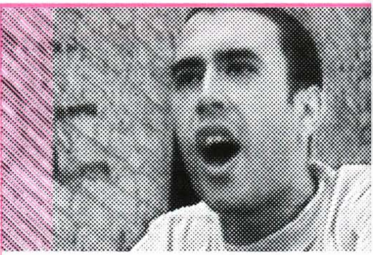
I don't think many people really approached us... well, Fugazi was approached by Hollywood to be in this movie called *Kingpin*.

The bowling comedy??

Yeah. They wanted us to play in it.

[Both laugh.]

SHAWN STERN



Guitarist/Vocalist – YOUTH BRIGADE; Self – *ANOTHER STATE OF MIND*

DAM: How did the filmmakers approach you?

SS: I knew them both from high school. Adam Small had all the gear... he was working for this rich guy, going out to video him on his boats or at his houses whenever the guy called. So, he used his stuff and his money to do the film, unknown to the rich guy, whose name was Big Bob. He was a pretty conservative Republican, according to what Adam told me, and would not have been OK with them following around punk bands on his dime.

What are some of the most glaring differences between putting together a punk tour then vs. now?

Of course, it was much harder then because the network didn't really exist. We got people to take a chance, whether it was an established nightclub or a college or promoter. A lot of them didn't know what punk was, or at least who we were. Nowadays it's much easier to book a tour and many people have said that *Another State of Mind* helped them understand how to do a tour...or what not to do!

What are some of the most challenging things that happened in association with

the documentary and tour? Any comedies of error not captured in the movie?

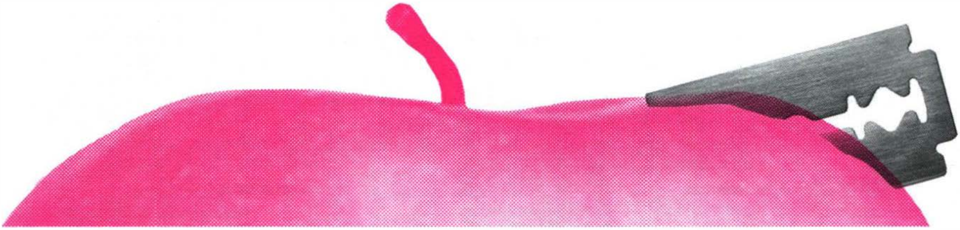
Well, the bus became the star because it kept breaking down and without it we couldn't actually do the tour. Every show we missed meant money we didn't have and a longer drive. Luckily, we had Monk and we were able to make it as far as we did. The crew missed some crazy fights and drunkenness, but I'm not sure why.

When you watch the movie now, is it painful or entertaining?

It's great, always entertaining. There are parts I still think are stupid, like the scene they made up having kids diving in their pool to "practice" stage diving and the goth girl in D.C. who didn't come to the show and really had nothing to do with the tour in particular. But overall it's a wonderful documentary.

Do you maintain a relationship with anyone involved outside of your own bond?

I saw Adam Small and Peter Stuart at a screening of the movie celebrating its 20-year anniversary a few years ago at the LA Film Festival. I see Mike Ness every once in awhile. I see Derek O'Brien, Social Distortion's drummer, the most cause he plays for the Adolescents. Other than that, not much as the other guys don't seem to be around the punk scene anymore.



THE APPLE

Dir. Menahem Galan / 1980

A surreal journey through the neon hell of the music industry.

This PG-rated g-string 'n' glitter fairytale is set in the future year of 1994, where titanic music monarchy BIM (Boogalow International Music) has achieved a tight grip on the world's imagination. The company is led by the brazenly devilish Mr. Boogalow (Vladek Sheybal), an underfed, smirking demon of a man who delights in high finance and moral corruption. Once he sets his sights on the clean-cut, folk-singing duo of Bibi (Catherine Mary Stewart) and Alphie (George Gilmour), the young couple is sent flying into a decadent netherworld that tears them apart and causes them to burst into song often and without fair warning.

Drugged by Boogalow's flashy goons at a glitzy party, Alphie takes in a kaleidoscopic parade of high-end lowlifes, each pitter-pattering past the blurred camera in their tinfoil wardrobes and pastel facepaint. Among them is a towering, lanky, sallow nightbeast in red space goggles, blue lipstick and leopard-print garb. Though he's the only identifiably new wave member of Boogalow's expansive entourage, he's certainly not alone in his garish vampirism of post-punk outrageousness. In the world of *The Apple*, everyone from toddlers to grandpas indulge in the eye-gouging excesses of future fashion, all of which is marketed by the nefarious BIM. Fortunately, God later shows up in a flying Cadillac to sort things out.

Director Golan would see success in the industry through making and/or marketing films, many under his action-oriented Cannon Group umbrella along with partner Yoram Globus. *The Apple* is a departure from his (or anyone's) other work, and seems like a much more personally-driven project, with him writing and producing as well. Upon its release, audiences were open and sincere with their reaction to the movie; *Apple*-goers at Hollywood's Paramount Theater were allegedly so disgusted that they pelted the screen with the premiere's giveaway items, causing serious damage. Critics were no less savage, and the movie disappeared as quickly as its male lead Gilmour, who never set foot in front of a camera again. (ZC)

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Dir. Mark L. Lester / 1986

Two security guards investigate their corrupt employer.

John Candy and Eugene Levy play the inquisitive watchmen in this action comedy from the director of the incredible *Class of 1984*. In one scene, the two run into a porno shop where various sleazoids stare them down. A man with a mohawk paces the floor. Candy leaves disguised as a Divine look-alike. Levy wears assless chaps, a dog collar and a stud bracelet. A man with a green mohawk stands outside. Tito Puente has a cameo for no good reason, and Steve Railsback is off the motherfucking hook as a hyped-up cowboy who rams his semi truck through rush-hour traffic. (BC)

ATHENS, GA: INSIDE OUT

Dir. Tony Gayton / 1987

A neighborly documentary on the then-flourishing Athens independent rock scene.

The B-B-Que Killers' drunken beats provide the only definable punk assaults in the film, but several of the showcased acts are equally resolute in their originality. Groups like The B-52s and R.E.M. are given no more special treatment than lesser-known, locals-only legends Limbo District and The Squalls. A huge amount of respect is shown for Pylon, a primal but danceable band that was crucial to the founding of Athens' musical community. Live early footage of the group conveys their intense, unconventional energy.

Director Gayton seems to have been impacted by the smartly-detached, but human-centric work of Errol Morris, as Athens' tone is set as much through interviews with non-musical denizens as its performers. Even the proprietor of Walter's Barbecue is given a platform to expound on the small town's unique properties, and mentions the time R.E.M. brought "The Asshole Surfers" by his legendary establishment. Also included is a fascinating interview with elderly self-proclaimed visionary artist Reverend Howard Finster, a heaven-powered fingerpainter who provided the art for the Talking Heads *Little Creatures* record. The release was later given an Album Cover of the Year award despite the fact that Finster had initially painted their name as "The Peeping Heads." (*ZC*)

ATOLLADERO

Dir. Oscar Aibar / 1995

In the year 2048, small-town deputy Lenny dreams of leaving the Texas Rangers for the Los Angeles police force.

How this movie has gone without notice for so long continues to boggle my mind. Equal parts Alex Cox and Alex de la Iglesia, *Atolladero* should really be up for a larger cult status and midnight showings. Still, not having a legit U.S. release (DVD or otherwise) probably answers for its lacking fanbase.

A small ramshackle town in South Texas is lorded over by a 150-year-old judge; a prune of a man who is held together by a computer that needs the occasional car-battery jumpstart! The town itself is filled with social miscreants and evildoers that dare not leave. Just try and the mechanized hounds and rangers will stop you. Permanently. A lone, fed-up, epileptic deputy Lenny decides to quit the force and move on. He fears telling his fellow officers that he's leaving since everyone in town answers to the maniacal robo-judge. He's just two weeks away from joining the LA police department, but will he make it as crime and the townsfolk's fears escalate out of control?

A fairly simple plot, to be sure, but peppered with enough colorful characters that it'll never leave you bored, and more often than not, your jaw will be hanging wide open. There's the half-breed pedophiliac henchman Madden (Iggy Pop); the priest with a bleeding cock and a fear of Japanese world takeover; the comic-loving masked wrestling fanatic who hopes to someday save the world; etc. Spewing over with cartoon violence and pitch black humor, *Atolladero* has a feel not too far off center of both Alexes' *Repo Man, El Patrullero, Accion Mutante* or *El Dia de la Bestia*. Spaghetti Western fans will dig the overall tone (All men are ruthless and all women are whores. Is this a Leone picture? Maybe Peckinpah?), and post-apocalypse nerds will take in the *Mad Max*-style gadgetry and maniacs with glee. The only real drawback to the whole experience is the somewhat clunky digital effects that sprout up now and again (the hounds I mentioned look like *Power Ranger* outtakes), but nothing takes away from the overall gonzo good-time feel. Hell, a movie with flying cars, "Everybody dies" cowboy aesthetics, *and* masked wrestlers? Did I mention Iggy Pop? (*RF*)

ATTACK OF THE HIDEOPOID

Dir. Rick Werner Fahr / 1989

A shot-on-video "wonder" from the Pacific Northwest.

There's a female character with messy, but styled, bleached hair. There's some random digitized footage of giant breasts being rubbed. A cat eats some brains. The gore in the movie is really bad and the blood looks like BBQ sauce. The actor who plays protagonist Billy is craaazy. He likes to eat raw meat and control peoples' minds with a blue cartoon snake. A group of women start a band. One cuts her hair short and wears leather and a skull-and-crossbones shirt. She can somehow play electric riffs with an acoustic guitar. Another girl has orange hair and wears a leopard-print dress. A homeless person calls them "goddamn fuckin' punks." Someone named Orange Juice did the lighting for this film. (*BC*)

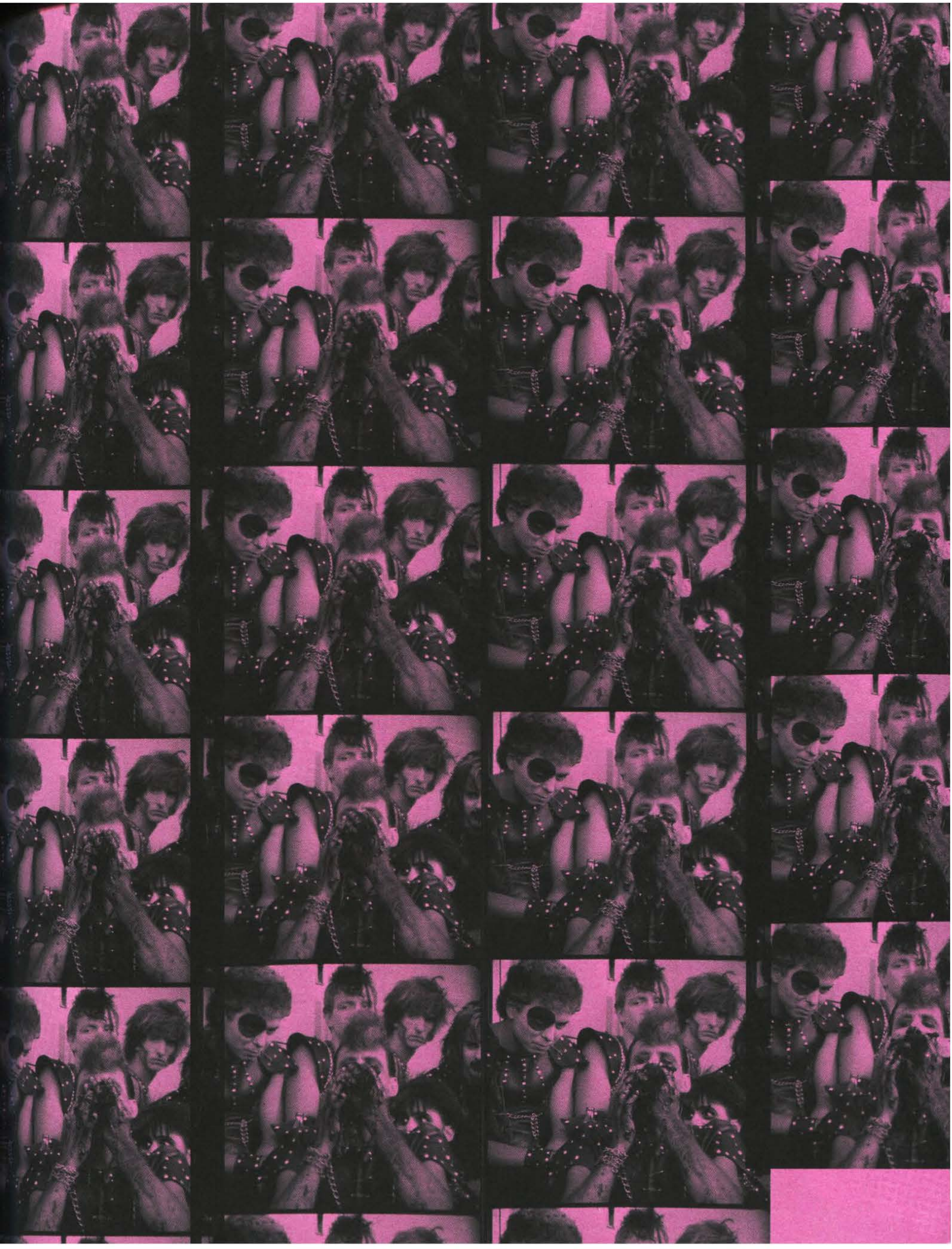
AVENGING ANGEL

Dir. Robert Vincent O'Neill / 1985

Molly seeks vengeance for the murder of her friend Lt. Andrews.

Though the film was released just a year after the first *Angel*, our story begins half a decade later. Now free of her life of prostitution, Molly is shocked to hear of Andrews' death. She returns to the old neighborhood and bands her crew together to take care of business. Returning for the second round are Chaplin impersonator Yo-Yo Charlie, lovable cowboy Kit Carson and the unstoppable Solly, this time with a Buzzcocks T-shirt and rainbow suspenders. They're joined by a star-spangled street corner goof named Johnny Glitter, and the gang is ready for action.

As you may have guessed, the second installment has nothing on its predecessor. It's played too much for laughs and feels like the rushed production it likely was, but there are still some effective moments, like when Molly stops a crooked cop from shooting her by bouncing a bagel off his forehead. Also, don't give up before the baby vs. corpse scene. (*ZC*)



THE BACHELOR

Dir. Gary Sinyor / 1999

After flubbing a wedding proposal, Jimmy (Chris O'Donnell) is told that he inherits $100,000,000 on the condition that he gets married the next day.

To write that this tepid remake of a Buster Keaton classic is "bad" would imply that there is something in this movie worth writing about. Co-star Renee Zellweger has the comic timing of a 5-year-old dying of leukemia. Sarah Silverman has a cameo but nothing funny to say: it's okay, though, neither does anyone else. A tough-as-nails girl with blue streaks in her hair, black fingernails and a black bra under her wedding dress appears among a desperate mob of would-be brides. She fights a biker lady amidst the warm glow that is the dwindling twilight of Chris O'Donnell's career, and is the kind of milquetoast interpretation of punk that a middle-aged Midwestern mom would dream up. *The Bachelor* is an unfunny 90-minute sexist joke your drunken uncle would spew at Thanksgiving, only instead of being a good ol'-fashioned offense against women, it's an offense against time and space. (*BLB*)

BACHELOR PARTY

Dir. Neal Israel / 1984

A group of friends decide to throw a bachelor party.

A better title would be *Planning a Bachelor Party*, since it takes an hour for the party to start, with the actual festivities running for under 30 minutes. In attendance are prostitutes, a cocaine-snorting donkey, two punks with bleach-blond spikes and Angel and The Reruns, an all-girl band with gigantic '60s beehive hairdos. The simultaneous bachelorette party features oiled fellas dressed as cavemen who strip to AM radio standard "Alley Oop." Surprisingly, this isn't as erotic of a song selection as you'd think. Two-time Academy Award winner Tom Hanks shoves his face under a woman's bosom. Wendie Jo Sperber beats up her husband and a bunch of cops. The quasi-suave Adrian Zmed actually sings the song "Little Demon," and it is a true jam. This film promotes drug use, bestiality and combinations thereof. Executive producer Sharad Patel had just moved to the United States after directing *The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin*. (*BC*)

BACK TO SCHOOL

Dir. Alan Metter / 1986

Millionaire Thornton Melon (Rodney Dangerfield) goes to college with his son to prove that it's the right thing to do.

Dangerfield is at his absolute best, delivering more one-liners than Groucho Marx in his finest hour. This movie is sort of the family version of *Animal House*, with that film's co-writer Harold Ramis pitching in on the script. Not to say it isn't without some adult humor: Robert Downey Jr. does fall to the floor, spread his legs and shout, "Do me!" At some points in the film, Downey looks very normal, while at other times he sports a Don King-sized flat top, a helmet with a nuclear warhead shoved through it or styled red-n-blue hair which Dangerfield takes note of: "I think you're trying to get back at your parents." Tiny character actor Burt Young (*Rocky*) holds his own in a bar fight where he ruthlessly beats a few jocks. Later on, monkeys eat pizza. Also starring Keith Gordon, the always brilliant Robert Picardo, M. Emmet Walsh, Adrienne Barbeau, Sally Kellerman, Ned Beatty, Sam Kinison, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Oingo Boingo (Danny Elfman also does the terrific score). For fans of things that are good. (*BC*)

BACK TO THE BEACH

Dir. Lyndall Hobbs / 1987

Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello reunite for (and executive produce) this MTV-devolved take on their classic '60s beach party movies.

The perennial clambake duo have grown into imperfect adults, thanks to a tragic surfing accident that transformed The Big Kahuna (Avalon) into an embittered used car salesman. Their adolescent son Bobby is a smirking, pierced delinquent who occasionally spikes his hair or spraypaints a skull on the living room wall. The family decides it's high time for a coastal vacation, but relaxation is impossible when their daughter has shacked up with a surfer dud and technicolor punk maniacs have taken over the sand. Avalon sasses them by asking if they "get their hair cut at the Braille Barber College." Their humorless leader Zed is unamused, as is his right-hand man, an obese, mustachioed, spiked warthog who gives infants punk rock makeovers at his 75-cents-an-hour babysitting service.

When Annette and her daughter stage a massive pajama party, Zed and his gang join in, each skunk-striped wasteoid grabbing a girl for a few rounds of clean pillow-fightin' fun. Never in your life did you expect to see iconic Mouseketeer Funicello bouncing around with a vicious mascara'ed brute. Even more daring is her collaboration with Fishbone, during which she struts around with attention-starved, mohawked frontman Angelo Moore singing, "Ska! Ska! Ska!" Christ. The musical shame intensifies further in the following scene where deceased white blues criminal Stevie Ray Vaughan pulls off an ear-raping jam session with surf rock legend Dick Dale. Somehow, the punks refrain from bursting through the club's wall to escape. At a beach party, ultimate LA punk/new wave, DJ Rodney Bingenheimer spins 45s until Pee-wee Herman appears to perform "Surfin' Bird." At the song's climax, he blazes into a electric blue glow and flies off into the night on a magic surfboard. This is one of the top three most important moments in cinematic history.

The film leans heavily on nods to yesteryear, with cameos from the likes of Don Adams (*Get Smart*), singer Edd Byrnes, Jerry "The Beav" Mathers and even Gilligan and The Skipper. The punks in *Back to the Beach* are among the most colorful—and misrepresented—on record, but their absurdity and consistent prominence shows an inspiring, naïvely innocent appreciation of the new wave aesthetic. (*ZC*)

BAD GIRLS' DORMITORY

Dir. Tim Kincaid / 1986

The female inmates of a low-grade correctional facility plan a breakout.

Sleazy Times Square excretia with lots of sloppy violence and rape. What do you expect from a prison run by an evil German? A girl goes into the big house with crazy, rooster-styled hair, but sadly must wash all of her gel out before being locked away. Don't miss the huge birthmark featured in one of the many gratuitously lengthy shower scenes. Wait, is it normal for the guards to shower with the inmates? Also look for the dude with subtly dyed red hair and a moustache at the dance where men are allowed to mingle with the female prisoners. Even the guards can't stop from shaking it when the tune "Hose Me Down" plays. Take notes during the suicide scene of a woman tying a lengthy rope—which is apparently easy to get on the inside—around her feet and jumping out a window to smash against the wall: even in death, a loser. (*BC*)

BAD GIRLS IN THE MOVIES

Dir. Domonic Paris / 1986

A $30 production that arbitrarily strings together clips of various films, most of which feature at least one boob.

A camcorder reenactment of a woman's prison incarceration kicks off this baseless assemblage of mostly lurid exploitation scenes, though the occasional 1930s Western segment sneaks in to knock things further off balance. The "director" of this "film" had existed at the periphery of the industry for years, churning forth swap meet-caliber VHS cloggers like *Dracula's Last Rites* until bottoming out here. For no discernible reason, there's a lengthy brick of nudity-free '50s news footage of world's fattest man Robert Earl Hughes, who died at 32 weighing over a thousand pounds, and has nothing to do with bad girls or movies. Equally mystifying is the inclusion of a section from Penelope Spheeris' *Suburbia*, in which LA band D.I. performs while a misplaced debutante gets her clothing compromised by a crowd of mocking punk kids. (*ZC*)

BALL BUSTERS

Dir. Alex de Renzy / 1984

Porn veteran host John Leslie sits in a chair and reminisces about his cronies.

Plotless porn featuring all the stars of the time: Nina Hartley, Ginger Lynn, Jamie Gillis, etc. Each sex scene is interspersed with clips of Mr. Leslie, who enlightens us to who we are soon going to see screw. He comments as to how hot they are or what beautiful eyes they have. In one particularly uncomfortable moment, he caresses a photo of Hartley's ass. In the following scene, she has sex with him and, more so than any other woman in this film, actually seems to be enjoying herself. One lesbian segment starts with a girl brushing another's hair and gabbing about Billy Idol, which of course turns them on.

Two cops find a punk girl (Sandra Stillman, aka Lois Ayres) sunbathing in the nude:

> "Hey, Sarge. Come quick. It's a punk over there."
> "Let's see what he knows."
> "It's a female."
> "Oh."
> "She's naked."
> [She has a bleach-blond mohawk and wears only a stud bracelet. They approach her.]
> "We're looking for a guy about seven foot tall. Might've come by here wearing a purple mohawk, riding a skateboard, stark naked. He has a cocker spaniel that accompanies him sometimes...called Blackie. Have you seen either of them?"

Who says that adult films have bad dialogue? This shit is brilliant. They then search her house, find some coke and have to investigate her cavities for more drugs. They do so by covering her with an excessive amount of lube and doing the wild thing. Isn't this a little bit outside the normal police procedure? She doesn't seem to mind. Mr. Leslie later tells us that Stillman doesn't normally wear her hair like that.

Recommended viewing for punk film completists and sad, lonely dads. This director is best known for filming 1977's *Long Jeanne Silver*, starring an actress of the same name who penetrated both male and female costars with a phallic leg stump. (*BC*)

BAND OF THE HAND

Dir. Paul Michael Glaser / 1986

Juvenile delinquents are taught the value of vigilante justice.

Though it opens with a fruitily attired gang war, this film quickly gets down to business as new wave loser J.L. coldly guns down his wife-beating dad. He then sits quietly on his front steps and listens to a Walkman as he waits for the cops to come take him away. Soon enough, he's washing dishes at the local juvenile detention facility. His bunkmates are two warring gang leaders: a teen cocaine millionaire and a blow-dried racist named Rattler. The youths end up dumped in the Everglades after stirring up more trouble, where they meet their new reform supervisor, a nutball swamp survivalist somehow affiliated with the Florida prison system. After fighting each other, the kids must contend with snakebites, wildcats, hungry bears and a lot of gross chunky water. They happen upon a huge outdoor BBQ where a Native American version of Journey jams some tunes on a bamboo stage. Returning to Miami, the reformed teens evict the junkies from an abandoned building and set up living quarters for themselves and some homeless Haitians. This draws the attention of local crime boss Cream (Laurence Fishburne). Though Cream and his soft-ass thugs give our heroes some heat, their real war with Miami's reigning voodoo drug lord (James Remar) is still ahead.

The pacing is strong and the characters well-developed, but the viewer is still left with several questions. Why does every punk and gangster in Florida wear a Hawaiian shirt? Why was Bob Dylan chosen to provide the title theme? Why does J.L. have an extremely feminine spider tattoo around his bellybutton? The latter might be partly explained by the fact that the young antisocialite is played by John Cameron Mitchell, the talented writer/director/actor/singer who'd go on to great renown as the creator and title character of transsexual rock opera *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

Visually, it's unmistakable that *Band of the Hand* was released at the height of *Miami Vice* mania, and about 90% of its cast did their time on that popular TV program as well. This was neither coincidence or imitation; *Vice* creator Michael Mann also acted as executive producer for this film. Director Glaser was Mann's longtime friend, and well-known for playing one of the leads on successful '70s TV series *Starsky & Hutch*, to which Mann had contributed. *Band* was initially developed as a TV series, but this plan failed due to its intense violence and grim subtexts. Instead, it was released in theaters, where it was able to fail on a much grander scale. (ZC)

BANNED

Dir. Roberta Findlay / 1989

The body of a straight-laced jazz musician is invaded
by the ghost of a wild punk.

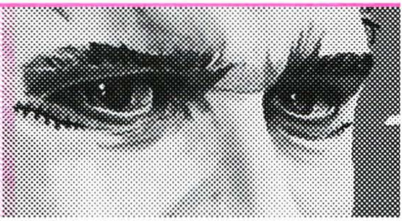
The great unreleased bonehead party comedy of all time, unexpectedly helmed by notorious exploitation/porn director Roberta Findlay (*Snuff*; *Dr. Love and His Strange House of Perversion*), who would never shoot another film again. *Banned*'s very first shot is an up-the-nostril pan on Teddy Homicide, a punk-maniac caricature with pierced ears, nose, eyebrows and everything else. His purple wedge cut stands erect as he stares unblinkingly at a recording engineer and the other members of Rotting Filth, a nigh-zoological array of neon-tinged leather crumbums. As Teddy botches the 56th take on his guitar solo, a pizza delivery man interrupts the session. His fellow musicians watch in terror as Teddy pulls an M-16 from his guitar case and unleashes a hot lead assault that takes out everyone in the room. After wistfully surveying his friends' corpses, he ends his life by drowning himself in the studio's toilet.

Ten years later, Teddy has possessed the restroom. When white jazz fusion group (!!!) Banned heads into the studio for a session, their lily-livered guitarist Kent unknowingly becomes a vessel for Teddy's spectral mayhem. During a posh nightclub show, the dead punk's spirit is unleashed and the docile Kent erupts into a Tourettes-caliber explosion of profanity and hatred on stage. He tears off his shirt, calls the crowd assholes and throws himself to the floor in a rabid tantrum. The bloodless audience suddenly goes wild, clawing at him in a frenzy. The backstage is flooded with converted fans, a few of whom are severe leopard-spotted or red-maned punks. Kent's musical persona isn't the only thing changed; his libido goes superhuman in what has to be the most madcap sex scene ever shot. After a rooftop shooting spree, he drastically alters his appearance to echo Teddy's; purple hair, leather wardrobe and all. Meanwhile, the group's popularity skyrockets, their sound a vomitous combination of caucasoid jazz and brain-dead punk that's reflected by their uniquely gutter-prep audience. Kent makes out with the entire front row while humping the air through his guitar solo. This newfound fervor for animal sensuality takes its toll; his relationship is strained when his girlfriend walks in on him sniffing glue and watching a porno, and his degeneration reaches its apex during a drunken three-way with two female sleazoids, one of whom exclaims, "You sound so punk when you vomit!!"

To my knowledge, this is the only film where punk behavior is treated as a variation on demonic possession. Early on, Kent is confronted by his drunk father who says, "What're you gonna turn into one of these punk rock guys? Gonna bite the heads off snakes and chickens?" Though those specific acts never take place, Kent/Teddy does become a hurtling man-weapon of pure indulgence, releasing his basest impulses in every self-destructive way imaginable. Fortunately, a gay televangelist plumber eventually performs a toilet exorcism, causing God himself to pull Kent through mid-air and void him of his punk infection.

As you've no doubt guessed, the tone of *Banned* is ruthlessly berserk. Middle Eastern terrorists zanily slaughter the patrons of a restaurant. An elderly German record executive snorts a few lines of "beef adrenal tissue," which temporarily turns him into a muscular black man. From boners to banana peels, no joke is too low, but all are delivered with an eagerness that makes even the heaviest groaner forgivable. The script was written by Jim Cirile, who had appeared as an actor in Findlay's 1988 release *Prime Evil*, but wouldn't again hear from her after *Banned* was strangled in its pre-distribution crib. We contacted the filmmaker regarding her thoughts on the movie and why she never returned to directing after its completion. At first she was very open and conversational, but when I said the title of the film I hoped to discuss, she blurted, "Not interested" and hung up. (ZC)

JIM CIRILE



Writer – *BANNED*

DAM: How did *Banned* get started?

JC: The idea came out of my desire to rebrand Reeltime, the company owned by director Roberta Findlay and producer Walter Sear. They'd had some success with ultra-low-budget schlock horror films, but the foreign sales picture was changing even then and buyers were less and less enthusiastic about ponying up for films with no stars and dubious production values.

I was a young iconoclast screenwriter working at Reeltime. I had an idea for a punk rock version of *All of Me* and sold them on the idea of taking the company in a different direction. Roberta had a penchant for screwball comedy and was a big *Honeymooners* fan, and was intrigued by the idea. Secretly, I set out to make the script as cult-y as possible so that things like bad camera work and sound would actually work in our favor.

Did the film grow out of an interest in punk, or was the movement just a fun component to create the character of Teddy Homicide?

JC: I was a fan of punk and had played in a couple of punk and metal bands. But I'm also a jazz fan and a bit of a musical snob. So the idea of combining those two disparate influences into one character was fun — a milquetoast jazz jackass and an ultraviolent, corrosives-snorting brain-dead Brit punk star. Teddy was obviously cribbed off Sid Vicious, but wackier. The subtext of it all was to skewer punk and jazz by pointing out the clichés of both.

Was there ever any kind of public screening or critical assessment of the film?

None. After the film was done, Reeltime's foreign sales rep couldn't give it away. It was shocking. The principals had invested their own money in the film, and they both took a huge hit on it. It's sad and I partially blame myself. Had they made another horror schlocker they would likely at least have made their money back. On the other had, the film's bad sound, lighting, and camerawork overwhelmed the Ed Wood appeal, thus scaring buyers away. It probably could have gotten some word of mouth had it been picked up by a distributor who knew how to market this type of movie, but that didn't happen. To this day it remains unavailable in any format.

What about Roberto Findlay? Have you spoken to her in recent years?

Nope. I imagine the film is a massive sore spot for her.

BASKET CASE

Dir. Frank Henenlotter / 1982

A mentally unstable man and his parasitic twin brother murder the doctors responsible for their surgical separation.

Exploitation film nostalgists unanimously sing the praises of New York's now-defunct 42nd St. sleaze row, where courageous moviegoers would brave pimps and pushers to take in triple features of the most objectionable movies in circulation. Titles like *I Drink Your Blood* and *Black Mama, White Mama* would dangle off busted marquees for weeks or months, raking in their meager split of the all-night take. Henenlotter's debut film *Basket Case* is among the greatest examples of the form, and is hands down the best movie made by, for, about and starring the 42nd St. set themselves.

Former Siamese twins Duane and the hideously deformed, stumpish Belial appear in Manhattan with vengeance on their unified mind. As they viciously wipe out the parties who divided them, Belial's existence is slowly revealed, culminating in a flophouse bloodbath like no other. After one particularly juicy slaying a crowd of NY lowlifes gather in the slum lobby for a peek at the corpse. One of these curious onlookers is a staunch new waver, his blond hair, white sunglasses and cheetah-print shirt glowing in contrast with all the wino grays and junkie browns on display, demonstrating the variety of people that lit up even the dingiest corners of the city at the height of its low culture.

Performances come from a talented cast of non-professionals, the best of which being the film's lead Kevin Van Hentenryck. The young actor manages to transform from wide-eyed innocent to kill-hungry annihilator in seconds, and carries the extremely low-budget film through any potentially awkward moments (including a long segment where he runs naked down freezing Manhattan sidewalks). But the greatest praise should be heaped on Henenlotter for pulling off an impossibly entertaining feature with a fraction of the resources of other films of the time. (*ZC*)

BASQUIAT

Dir. Julian Schnabel / 1996

A tragic biopic, lovingly crafted by one of Basquiat's contemporaries.

Jean-Michel Basquiat has become one of the most well-known artists of the 20th century, but there was a time when he lived in a box and his canvas was New York City itself. The film picks up in 1979, right before Basquiat (Jeffrey Wright) was plucked from obscurity; a time notable for a creative explosion of art and music, and also for the fluctuating state of race relations. As a black man, Basquiat faced extreme, violent prejudice at the same time he was being exalted as the most important new voice in the art world.

There is evidence of this discrimination when Basquiat tries to hail a cab. The first several pass and a third is claimed by a trio of rowdy punks and new wavers down the street. It's not until his date (a white woman) steps forward and raises her hand that a cab stops. Another troubling factor in his life was drug addiction, which was the cause of his early demise. In a scene where he trades a painting for heroin at his drug dealer's apartment, he wades through the usual cast of junkie characters—slumped skeletons, pockmarked spazmos and a girl lazily tweaking the tips of her boyfriend's spiked hair—and then makes a hasty exit with his skag.

This was Schnabel's debut film—he was previously a successful artist, working alongside Basquiat in the art scene—and he does a good job for his first time out. Wright is amazing in his role, and David Bowie delivers a pretty amusing Andy Warhol impersonation. (*LAF*)

BATMAN & ROBIN

Dir. Joel Schumacher / 1997

Costumed crimefighting hits an all-time low.

The impossibly garish final installment in this soulless series: So much money was dumped into the stomach-churning set design that they apparently couldn't afford a screenwriter. The viewer receives a limp retread of the already reeking previous film and then it gets even smellier, as Batman (George Clooney) is forced to face off with watery versions of multiple foes. The villains are Mr. Freeze (Arnold Schwarzenegger) with his blue skin and cornucopia of clunking ice puns; chlorophyll-powered Poison Ivy (Uma Thurman); and brain-dead battle-goon Bane. But none of the technicolor baddies are as vibrant as the carnivalesque punks gathered around Coolio (!!!) at an underground motorcycle showdown. One of these clowned-out fashion mutants even sports a mohawk on his crash helmet!

Batgirl is introduced into the franchise, but ten minutes into this visual onslaught, even a diehard bat-fan is too beaten down to care. Proof it's possible for a live-action movie adaptation to be more two-dimensional than its comic book counterpart. Oh, Adam West, where were you when we needed you most? (*ZC*)

BATMAN FOREVER

Dir. Joel Schumacher / 1995

Batman continues to make Gotham safe for muggers and junkies.

The third in the popular '80s franchise, and the first of two unwatchable dead-eyed tragedies from director Schumacher. In this installment, Batman (Val Kilmer) takes on intrepid sidekick Robin (Chris O'Donnell), romances doctor Chase Meridian (Nicole Kidman) and battles both The Riddler and Two-Face. While Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey engage in a villainous ham war, Kilmer's Batman performance is as dynamic as a can of soup. The nipples on his batsuit do nothing to stimulate much-needed excitement.

The entire film is coated in new wave gaudiness, but this garish punk-derived visual influence is as outrageously misguided as it is heavy. Bruce Wayne attends a gala charity ball where a neon-clad band plays swing jazz. Their guitarist flaunts Cyndi Lauper chic while the pianist grins from beneath an eye-burning green mohawk. The visual situation worsens when The Riddler interrupts the proceedings. Orange-pink buzzcut aside, Carrey out-Carreys Carrey until he becomes an open sore on all five of the viewer's senses. He prances, occasionally speaks in a wacky elderly British voice, says the word "joygasm" and acts mockingly effeminate whenever committing a crime.

Later, Robin borrows the Batmobile and heads downtown. A version of The Damned's "Smash It Up" by rock leeches The Offspring blares as an enormous throng of Toys "R" Us-caliber punks spill out to menace Gotham's citizens, led by none other than low-rent action star Don "The Dragon" Wilson. Spikes, mohawks and facepaint cloud the streets. One of these loose nuts is gussied up as a skeleton with a receding hairline. Though I give hack helmer Schumacher credit for the sheer quantity of punks in the scene, the *quality* is another matter entirely. These would-be wasteoids could get their asses kicked at a John Denver concert; green dreadlocks and black light-activated sweatpants are as punk as Victorian architecture. Robin effortlessly defeats an army of these losers as they wave fluorescent bulbs and hoot. (*ZC*)

BATMAN RETURNS

Dir. Tim Burton / 1992

Batman...returns.

Batman battles not one but *three* villains in this round of the series! The Penguin, Catwoman and a ruthless entrepreneur work together to foil Batman and take over Gotham City. Each member of this haphazard family of evildoers has a different agenda, which ultimately works against the team and gives Batman a few more victory notches in his swanky little utility belt.

Michelle Pfeiffer offers a convincing portrayal of a homely secretary who's "forced into resignation" by corrupt employer Max Shreck (played by an uncharacteristically attractive Christopher Walken). This is just the unlucky break she needs to move on up the corporate ladder and turn into a sex kitten, for through death, she's resurrected as Catwoman. Seemingly reprising her character in *Scarface*, Pfeiffer here exchanges sniffing cocaine from her pinky to lapping milk from a saucer and feigning interest in Michael Keaton as Batman.

The Penguin finds out who his parents are and goes to the city cemetery to look upon their headstones. A crowd has gathered outside the gates for this momentous occasion, and there, among the black clothes and tilted berets, straining to catch a glimpse of the pathetic orphaned supervillain along with everyone else, is a mohawked punk, his stiffened 'do appearing through the mob like a sail in a sea of brooding black clouds. (*BI*)

BATTLE HEATER

Dir. Joji Iita / 1990

Residents of a Japanese apartment building
experience violence and zaniness.

Furuchi is a young man who falls down a lot. His neighbors across the hall are a young couple trying to dispose of a body they've sawed in half, and a few doors further down is a sweetly romantic elderly

couple bent on double suicide. Downstairs, spiked-n-mohawked punk band Bloody Savie bust out a song: "Crap trap! Oh! That's crap trap!" Furuchi comes across a used space heater which he sets up in his tiny living room. The machine awakens and slowly reveals a carnivorous nature, using any available electricity to increase its hunger.

Yep, a movie about a vicious, man-eating heater. But, oddly enough, the project is hilarious and entertaining throughout; an obscure Japanese horror-comedy well worth the search. Every aspect of the film is awkward and impractical, and it all works to the viewer's benefit. Chumpish protagonist Furuchi is played by Pappara Kawai, guitarist from real-life rock group Bakufu Slump, who were hugely successful in Japan for over a decade and provide much of *Battle Heater*'s soundtrack. Their rhythm section—drummer New Funky Suekichi and bassist B-B-Q Wasada—appear as members of the animalistic Bloody Savie. Toward the end of the film, the band performs in an auditorium full of teenage girls weeping because their schoolteacher retired. (*ZC*)

BEACH BALLS

Dir. Joe Ritter / 1988

A kid tries to impress a girl by throwing a party
at his parents' seaside home.

Charlie (Philip Paley, who played Cha-Ka on the original *Land of the Lost!*) and Scully (Steven Tash, who played the guy who gets electrocuted by Bill Murray at the beginning of *Ghostbusters*) are out to get laid. Charlie's mom is angered by his rock record after she plays it backwards and hears "Satan is bitchin'." Charlie swears that it has nothing to do with the band thinking that the devil is cool, but that the masked lyrics in fact mean that Satan is complaining about something. Actor Gary Schneider was over the top in both *The Toxic Avenger* and *Class of Nuke 'Em High*, and here he doesn't tone it down as subtle punk Mollusk, an unshaven bully with a pierced ear and a dirty, torn T-shirt. He owns a pit bull and has anger problems. One character insults his mother, and Mollusk responds by biting the top off a glass bottle and giving a lion's roar in the offending party's face. The hard rock band in this film is called Severed Heads in a Bag. What's more metal: the piano key strap on the bandmate's guitar, or their song about television soap operas? A headbanger is kicked in the balls and says, "Oh man, that was lame." The scene where the jock worries that he might be a homosexual is priceless. Directed by the writer of *The Toxic Avenger*. (BC)

BEACH HOUSE

Dir. John Gallagher / 1982

Some bullshit happens around a beach house.

The ugliest people ever brought together for one movie. With each frame they get uglier and uglier. Not just ugly on the outside (and man, are they ever) but on the inside as well. A lot of them are goons from Brooklyn, one of whom has an unhealthy George Washington fixation. He immediately hangs a portrait of the founding father in the rented beach house's kitchen, and later scolds his kid sister for passing by the picture wearing a bikini. Another New York youth's false upper teeth almost pop out in what is probably the film's craziest moment. There are lots of "sexy" parts, like the montage of boys reacting to girls' privates and the lets-all-make-out-with-this-one-girl-at-the-same-time scene. The punk, named Googie, wears a red-and-white striped sleeveless shirt and large earring, causing someone to shout, "Hey, mister punk rocker. You look like a fuckin' faggot with that earring." His band plays during a ferocious turkey-eating scene. The drummer beats the skins with turkey legs. The drum kit is plastered with a Pleasantville Music Shoppe sticker, which must be the name of the place they rented their band equipment from. However, there is a part when Googie sings barbershop quartet with his pals, so maybe it's the name of his lousy band. He later loses the remainder of his meager punk cred by playing folk music while people make tender love. Please note the secret rubber duckie in the conversation-on-the-toilet scene. (*BC*)

BEAKS: THE MOVIE

aka BIRDS OF PREY aka EVIL BIRDS

Dir. René Cardona Jr. / 1987

Hitchcock's avian classic is given schlock treatment.

A long, gory hang gliding intro segues into 90 minutes of eye-plucking and slow-motion cinematography. *Blue Lagoon* star Christopher Atkins is Peter the news cameraman. He really delivers the Christmas ham with each love scene, moment of terror and insight on life. There are truly amazing shots of real birds hanging out, flying near small children and getting shotgunned out of the sky. When train passengers are warned about the dangerous feathered foes, an unflappable traveler in a leather jacket thinks that Colonel Sanders should be called in to handle the situation. A lady with an oversized orange mohawk is told not to open the train's curtains. The constant moody soundtrack, fast pace and effective scares make this a worthwhile late-night view. (*BC*)

BEASTIES

Dir: Steven Paul Contreras / 1991

The hate of punks feeds the energy of a dark master who lives
in the basement of a dingy new wave club.

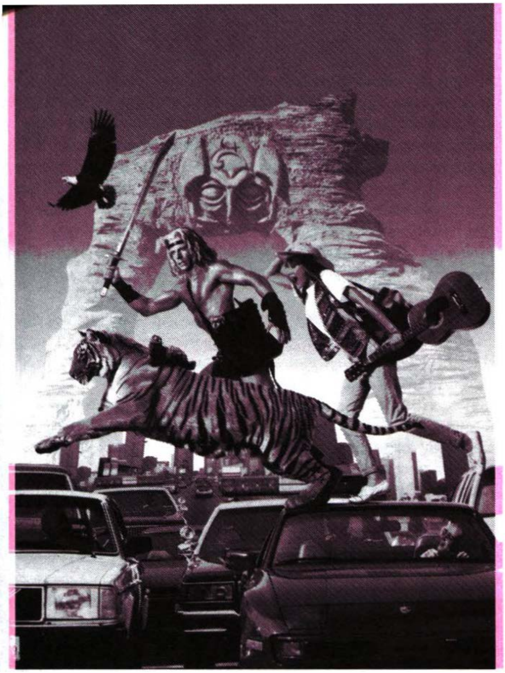
Sounds good. It ain't. Sometimes low-budget horror ineptitude is fun and charming. Other times it's just plain inept. A lot of shots are blurry or dark, the pacing is Heinz 57 slow and just when you think it's over, there are 30 more minutes of bunk. The video box states it's *Gremlins* meets *Back to the Future*, and sure, there are little Gremlin-like spuds and some time travel, but it has nothing in common with any Zemeckis joint except that it sucks like *Forrest Gump*. There are lots of thrown-together punks. The head of the juvie gang is Hammerhead, outfitted with a dog collar and blue/red hair. Always grumpin', he refers to folks as twerps, dorks and kiddies. He approaches an evil otherworldly character on a bone throne in his club's basement and says, "We've come for your help. Some punks need thrashin'." Hammerhead's army of cronies is equally baffling. One wears a tie-dyed shirt, another Indian warpaint, and then there's Slither (Michael Perry) who wears a leather jacket with a peace sign on the back. (*BC*)

BEASTMASTER 2: THROUGH THE PORTAL OF TIME

Dir. Sylvio Tabet / 1991

Animal-friendly warrior Dar travels to 20th century Los Angeles
to save the world from black-hearted overlord Arklon.

Phantasm director Don Coscarelli wisely washed his hands of this sequel to his highly successful swords & sorcery epic, preferring instead to sit back and watch one-time-only filmmaker Tabet plow it into the concrete. In this enormously fractured fairytale, Dar (Marc Singer) drags his animal companions through a time portal



into the mean streets of Hollywood in pursuit of powermad dark mage Arklon (Wings Hauser). As proven in the countless movies that indulge in this formula (*Time Barbarians*, *Lords of Magick*, etc.), the big city is no place for half-naked medieval warriors, and trouble abounds. The evil Arklon is far more adaptable to modern times than our hero, and his outfit is sized up approvingly by a decked-out punk girl. A true party animal, he later uses an ancient mystical laser weapon to rip open two women's blouses. One of his henchmen is none other than Robert "*Maniac Cop*" Z'Dar, which results in an unprecedented pairing of enormous chins when the two villains combine their mighty jawpower onscreen. Sadly, neither actor is given the proper script to best showcase their talents; this is a far cry from Hauser's alley-crawling villain Ramrod in the untouchable *Vice Squad*.

Dar's search for Arklon is difficult, and the police slow it further with a forced interrogation. Says the commanding officer: "Have someone run a check on all loincloth freaks." Once freed, Dar befriends a hyperactive valley girl (Kari Wuhrer) and is back on the hunt. As she drives him through Hollywood, he marvels at the freaks and landmarks, including movie theaters playing Patrick Swayze's *Ghost* and the vastly superior *Ghost Dad* (starring Bill Cosby and directed by Sidney Poitier). The reason for the double ghost reference remains a mystery. The film's dialogue highlight comes when Dar learns the Earth word "asshole," which he uses often with, uh, hilarious results.

This tatty sequel was released nine years after the original, which had become a heavily-edited staple of syndicated basic cable programming. Nevertheless, this installment bombed painfully, making less than 1/6 of its money back at the box office. A different *Beastmaster 2* had already been made by Italian exploitationeers in 1983, though it was only released with that title in the Philippines, available everywhere else as *Thor the Conqueror*. (*ZC*)

THE BEAT

Dir. Paul Mones / 1988

A quasi-autistic teenage poet teaches New York thugs
the true meaning of friendship or something.

Hellesbay, New York: a teeming hive of illiterate gutterbags. Introduced among their ranks is new kid Rex, a hunched, mumbling shut-in with delusions of a higher understanding. His classmates initially dub him "The Retard" and pound him to the concrete, but he soon wins them over with some high-spirited Rain Man-esque poetry slamming. Eventually, all the racists and boneheads in school form a unified group. Thank goodness.

Rex joins his worthless new pals at an Iron Skulls concert (played in the film by long-running East Coast hardcore group the Cro-Mags). By all appearances, this segment was shot at an actual show, with a large crowd of NYHC kids pumping their fists and mouthing every lyric. As false and uneven as the rest of the film is, this scene feels downright legitimate, with the band and audience giving almost enough sweat and blood to remedy the poetty to follow. To be fair, not *all* the dialogue is written with a feathered pen, as evidenced by this line: "Yo! My man Cheese Pie just got shot by two niggers from uptown!" Fuck you, Walt Whitman. (*ZC*)

BEAT STREET

Dir. Stan Lathan / 1984

The hardships of NYC life as told through breakin',
taggin' and illegitimate fatherin'.

Harry Belafonte was 57 years old when he produced and scored this earnest, dance-heavy youth musical, a direct cross between *Breakin'* and *Wild Style*. At a massive breakdance battle, the subculturally diverse crowd includes a pigtailed new waver in studded accoutrement, as well as a blue-frohawked dancing machine. But both of these female fashion adventurers are trumped by the wardrobe of the house band led by Afrika Bambaataa. At more modest venue The Burning Spear, the film's DJ protagonist Double K spins for the brilliant Santa rap by a young Kool Moe Dee. Besides these moments of energetic levity and zigzag mohawks, the film is a standard rags-to-nicer-rags story of realized dreams, including an unpalatable budding romance between Double K and Rae Dawn Chong. The gruesomely gospelized ensemble dance ending will leave you frowning to the beat. (*ZC*)

BEING DIFFERENT

Dir. Harry Rasky / 1981

A documentary exploration of dwarves, giants and
other "special people."

This good-natured exploitation of the physically unusual offers a comprehensive study of amputees, alligator men, bearded ladies and other people gifted with unique physical qualities. Rather than showcase their talents/attributes in a staged freakshow capacity, we're given a view of the subjects at home and work.

Midway through, we're transported to a packed disco, where a handful of culturally confused new wavers shake their asses and nod their war-painted skulls to the pounding bass. As these (probably hired) subculturoids get down and boogie, narrator Christopher Plummer explains, "Today, some-—often the young—try to be something other than what they are. To disguise, twist...to Freak Out." Other unexpected party beasts on the dance floor include a rollerskating dwarf and a pierced, bearded biker in rainbow-striped leggings. (*ZC*)

BELLYFRUIT

Dir. Kerri Green / 1999

Three teenage girls experience problems with sex and pregnancy.

The title *Bellyfruit* shouts light-hearted comedy. This is not. Various girls get drunk, high and impregnated, though not necessarily in that order. "Here's to being young and fucked up," a character shouts. At a party, a mohawked fella partakes in the fun. A girl finds out she is with child. Which of the 15 or so men that she slept with that week is the father? Later on, she wants to bring ecstasy to a party, but can't find a babysitter. Oh, the difficult choices young mothers face. A loser embarrasses himself in front of his girlfriend's mom by entering the room and talking about "a bitch with fake titties." The entire film is sort of like the afterschool special version of *Kids*; it's uncomfortable but with good intentions. Too bad it's rated R and any young person that could benefit from its endless morality plays can't watch it. Then this must exist solely to remind emotionally defeated adult viewers how shitty the world is. Thanks, *Bellyfruit*. (*BC*)

BERLIN NOW

Dir. Wolfgang Büld / 1985

A voyeuristic panorama of a specific moment in the German independent music scene.

The camera trails a woman through the fields and factory ruins of the Fatherland as she encounters various performers in mid-song. Industrial warriors Einstürzende Neubauten and Die Haut are among those mugging for the camera, and their rubble-strewn environment is dotted with appreciative punk spectators. The Sex Pistols are on the soundtrack, but nothing of the type is represented onscreen. An artsier format than Büld's other documentary work (like the excellent *Punk in London*), but a strong display of a major phase in music history. (*ZC*)

THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES

Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1993

Yokels get paid.

This film (actually released in Spain as "*Rustics in the Land of Money*") follows the same basic plot outline of the landmark TV series, but is infused with the fart, weiner and breast jokes that characterize modern comedy. Still, believe it or not, both Dabney Coleman and the late Jim Varney are in top form as Mr. Drysdale and Jed Clampett in Spheeris' could've-been-a-hell-of-a-lot-worse update. Maybe it's the orangutan gags that bring everything together.

Once the Clampetts have struck it rich in crude oil and relocated to sunny California, overnight billionaire Jed decides it's high time he finds a suitable wife. More than a thousand women show up to apply for the position. Among them are a biker, a geisha, a blue-haired frump and a mohawked rock primitive. In a rare moment of introspective emotion, Varney proves he could've been a respected actor, but opted to entertain the masses with cornball jokes and pratfalls as Ernest P. Worrell. I sincerely hail him for that decision. Later, Dolly Parton arrives at the Clampett mansion to sing "Happy Birthday." If you want to see Lily Tomlin drive a monster truck, rent this movie. And then ask yourself why you've never had sex. (*ZC*)

BIG

Dir. Penny Marshall / 1988

A wish traps a boy in the body of a man and no one can tell the difference.

Adults. Could they be more boring? They wear earth-tone business suits, only care about money and their idea of fun is a pharmaceutical swap meet in the back of a limo. Even MacMillan Toy Company, a place that should be a magical workshop of delight, is staffed by joyless, backstabbing zombie drones. Enter Josh Baskin (Tom Hanks), a naïve man-child who is hired for data entry at the company, but is quickly promoted to VP of Product Development due to his genuine love of toys and his unique understanding of what kids want.

Why does Josh know what kids want? Because he's actually a 13-year-old Little Leaguer from New Jersey. After making a wish to an animatronic gypsy torso named Zoltar, he wakes up the next day Hulk-bustin' out of his G.I. Joe underoos. His best friend Billy gives him money and helps get him to New York to hide until he can undo the wish. The day his first paycheck arrives, Josh and Billy assemble a mountain of junk food and silly string, and party while the world's first pop punk Billy Idol snarls through "Rebel Yell" on MTV. And that's just a small taste of the good life; Josh soon has a massive loft that he outfits with toys, arcade games, a trampoline, soda machine and everything an adolescent boy could want.

Unfortunately, our beloved wunderkind starts to turn into a stuffy grown-up: he dates an uptight co-worker, his clothes go from kindergarten casual to junior executive, and he gets so wrapped up in his job that he ignores Billy. In spite of his appearance, Josh is not psychologically equipped to handle increasingly complicated adult situations, which forces him to decide between his new life and his old one. Hanks does a great job of portraying Josh's innocence and internal conflict. As part of the body swap bonanza of the late '80s, *Big* stands out thanks to his believable and totally enjoyable performance. (*LAF*)

BIG BUSINESS

Dir. Jim Abrahams / 1988

Two sets of shuffled infant sibling grow up in opposite environments so as to later be comically reintroduced.

Lily Tomlin and Bette Midler attempt to dust off their funnybones for this zany mistaken identity romp from previously flawless funnyman Abrahams (*Airplane*). Portraying both country-girl sweethearts and high-powered Madison Ave. executives, the actresses play their dual roles with a mixture of wild abandon and a less-obvious grim resignation. As the bumpkin pair stumble into the business pair's high-rolling world of Manhattan corporate power, every stereotyped, one-note character around them struggles to keep up: the seductive European gigolo, the clumsy gay stockbroker, and of course everyone's favorite film icon, the hillbilly mini-golf pro

(Fred Ward). When the latter makes his way to the big city, he ends up wandering Times Square surrounded by garden-variety hookers, con men, porn merchants and—last but not least—a glowering punk with an aerodynamic purple mohawk, cutting a pretty imposing figure for a guy in a Disney-produced Bette Midler movie. (*ZC*)

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

Dir. Stephen Herek / 1989

Lobotomized best friends kidnap historical luminaries for world's most epic phone-booth stuffing.

Bill S. Preston, Esq. (Alex Winter) and Ted "Theodore" Logan (Keanu Reeves) are seniors on the verge of failing history; their only hope is to deliver an impressive final report on how people from the past would view the world today. Their success is also the only hope for the people of the future, who rely on the music of Bill and Ted's band, Wyld Stallyns, to fuel their idyllic society. That's why Rufus (George Carlin) is sent back in time to help the guys pass history and keep the band together.

Using Rufus' phone-booth time machine, Bill and Ted assemble a dream team of world leaders, geniuses and rabble-rousers (including Go-Go's co-founder Jane Wiedlin as Joan of Arc!) to speak at their presentation. Alas, supervising that many Type A personalities proves impossible, and after their living exhibits run amok in the mall, they're all arrested. At the police station, the booking officers are baffled by the ragtag crew, all of whom claim to be people who are dead. As Sigmund Freud is grilled about his identity, he turns the questions around and analyzes his interrogator while a thug with a bleached mohawk gets the same treatment at the desk behind him.

In the Ray Bradbury story "A Sound of Thunder," the main character goes back in time and ruins the future by accidentally stepping on a single butterfly. In this late '80s classic, however, eight of the most important people in history are relocated to modern-day California without even the smallest negative consequence—unless, of course, you count the film career of Keanu Reeves. (*LAF*)

BIO-DOME

Dir. Jason Bloom / 1996

Two worthless morons endanger the future of mankind.

Beneath the bottom of the barrel. As low as your expectations may be for a Pauly Shore/Stephen Baldwin romp, you'll be nauseated beyond obliteration even before the aesthetically damaging opening credits are over. What follows is a brutal felony against the senses, as the comedy-crushing duo listens to agonizing pop-punk, waggle their tongues at women and chew each other's toenails. Though it's painful to admit, Shore's performance is nowhere near as difficult to endure as the dead-eyed grunts and spasms emitting from the Shame of the Baldwin Clan.

Eventually, the two are locked for a year inside the noticeably non-dome-shaped titular environmental experiment chamber, where zany hijinks (like sexual assault and testicular scratching) can be fully explored. Australian pop star Kylie Minogue plays scientist Petra Von Kant, an unexpected reference to the title character from a 1972 film by German auteur Rainer Werner Fassbinder. A flashback sequence features Baldwin in a Halloween store clearance sale punk get-up guessing Shore's previous meal by smelling his rectal emissions; just one of *Bio-Dome's* many, many bodily function segments. This movie just couldn't get any worse—wait, is that an early performance by Tenacious D? I stand corrected. (*ZC*)

BLACK MOON RISING

Dir. Harley Cokliss / 1986

A lone wolf mercenary faces off against murderously corrupt businessmen.

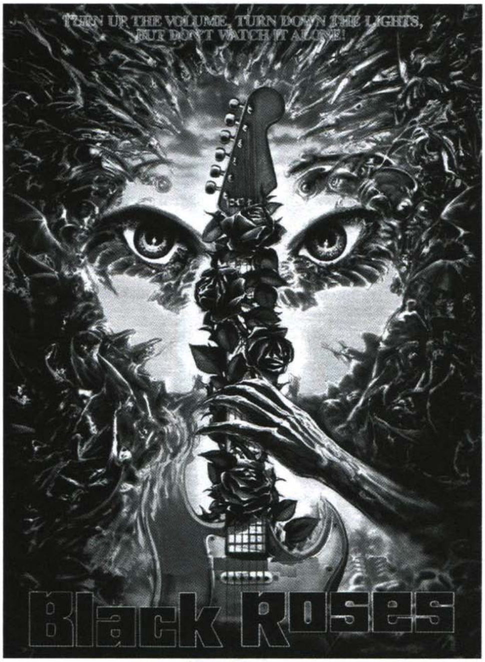
Tommy Lee Jones wasn't *quiiite* able to establish himself as an '80s action icon in this John Carpenter-penned auto theft fantasy. Jones plays Quint, a low-rent tough-guy-for-hire who fumbles into a high-end black market vehicle ring run by the conservative but dangerous Ryland (Robert Vaughn) and his master thief ladyfriend Nina (Linda Hamilton). A trio of punks passes in the background as Quint frowns over the seemingly impossible task of bringing down a multi-billion dollar crime empire singlehandedly. Nina has an extensive collection of hairpieces stored in her ultra-modern loft apartment, one of which is a screamingly erect new wave frightwig.

The film moves along with more TV-style inertia than an '80s machismofest like this can handle, but the supporting cast is undeniably powerful. Old guard action mainstays like Richard Jaeckel and Keenan Wynn appear alongside recognizable character actors including Bubba Smith, William Sanderson and Nick Cassavetes. Though he's unrecognizable, Lee Ving of Fear shows up to give Quint the beating of his life, even managing to pick him up by the crotch and throw him against a car. (*ZC*)

BLACK ROSES

Dir. John Fasano / 1988

A group of demons disguised as a heavy metal band possess the young residents of a small town, turning the teenage headbangers into killers.


TURN UP THE VOLUME, TURN DOWN THE LIGHTS,
BUT DON'T WATCH IT ALONE!
Black Roses

Directed by the maestro of hard-rock horror (Fasano also helmed *Rock 'n' Roll Nightmare*, perhaps the defining film of the genre), *Black Roses* serves as a thinly-veiled commentary on Tipper Gore's PMRC (Parental Music Resource Center) and the group's view that rock 'n' roll is a powerful force, turning good kids into homicidal maniacs. Aside from H.R. Giger's Penis Landscape poster included with the Dead Kennedys' *Frankenchrist* record, punk rock was never much of a target for the PMRC (they were more interested in persecuting Twisted Sister and Frank Zappa) but some parents feared that punk, along with metal and sexually suggestive Prince songs, were sure to turn their kids into juvenile delinquents. While some people merely suspect dudes like Ozzy Osborne are satanic, the titular band in this remarkable motion picture consists of 100% genuine demons with an agenda of corruption and sundry evildoings.

Previously only a studio outfit, hair-metal band The Black Roses kick off their world tour in a little town called Mills Basin, with a week's worth of concerts in a high school auditorium! Mills Basin somehow exists both in the U.S. and Canada, as all the municipal buildings display both Canadian and American flags. But I digress. Like Tipper Gore, the locals are afraid that the band will cause a teenage riot, but a sympathetic teacher (John Martin) convinces everybody that things will be all right. Unfortunately, the teacher is wrong, wrong, wrong and the demonic rockers infect the kids and their stereos with pure evil. The youths pierce their ears and start wearing black leather and spiked wristbands. They also commit vandalism, have sex and eventually begin killing their uptight parents. One girl even mutates into a horny topless demon with rubbery satanic boobs and a big bald head. In the movie's most memorable scene, a dad (Vincent Pastore, best known as Big Pussy on *The Sopranos*) tells his wayward son, "Only two kinds of men wear earrings: pirates and faggots. And I don't see no boat in the driveway." Then Big Pussy gets eaten by his son's occult-fueled stereo speaker.

While not much of a punk film, *Black Roses* does feature a guy in a Cro-Mags T-shirt getting zapped by the demonic rockers at a show, while another teen has a '50s/punk look with a leather jacket and chains. *Black Roses* is very metal and requires considerable tolerance of the genre (Lizzy Borden's "Me Against the World" is featured three times) and the film is certainly worth watching not only for cheap laffs, but also as a substantial historical artifact. (*SH*)

BLACK SHEEP

Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1996

Chris Farley and David Spade team up to put the "goober"
back in gubernatorial.

For every well-groomed and capable politician, there is a genetic junkyard of a sibling living in their shadow. In the mid-'90s, the consummate example was delivered to the world in the form of Roger Clinton; a drug-dealing, drunk-driving doofus with a nose for cocaine and profiteering. While Mike Donnelly's (Farley) transgressions might be less felonious, they are nonetheless causing problems for his brother, a candidate for the Governorship of Washington.

In just one of many campaign debacles, Mike sneaks backstage at a Rock the Vote concert where his brother is set to speak. After getting high with a reggae band, he walks to the side of the stage to watch Mudhoney whip the crowd into a frenzy. Guys in flannel roll over the hands of the grungy masses, and a misplaced punker pumps his fist in the air, almost reaching the top of his colossal hot-pink mohawk. The band exits and, mistaking him for his brother, pushes the mentally compromised Mike on stage. What ensues is a live-action ADD mix tape of mangled sound bites from great speeches throughout history, which is well received by the audience until his directive to "Kill whitey!" meets with horrified silence.

The characters in this movie are familiar: Farley's is a clumsy, well-intentioned teddy bear with permanent plumber's butt, and Spade's is a snarky, wise-cracking narcissist who will stop at nothing to succeed. Gary Busey runs around flashing his giant toenail teeth and shouting like a lunatic. In other words, no one is looking to broaden their range. The plot is quite close to *Tommy Boy*, so, if you're a fan of the original Farley-Spade masterpiece, watching *Black Sheep* is like being spooned by a couple of old pals. (*LAF*)

BLACK TO THE FUTURE

Dir. Phil Prince / 1986

Aliens help women live out their wildest dreams.

Mooncat works for hotline 976-Fantasy. Her body is painted multiple colors, she wears giant new wave sunglasses and has wild pink hair, which she complains looks like Tina Turner's. She's from outer space and offers a phone service that allows women a chance to ride in a giant pink time mobile. This movie is very confusing at times, but most mind-boggling is the title. Though there are a few African-Americans acting here, this is in no way a black-themed porn. In one scene a women complains that the walls have ears. They do. Ears of corn. I guess that joke was thrown in just in case a 6-year-old was watching this adult film. That child and this movie are so grounded. (*BC*)

BLADE RUNNER

Dir. Ridley Scott / 1982

Blade runner Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) hunts and
exterminates human-like robots.

Entire books have already been written about this undeniably classic sci-fi film that envisions a future America with big bright signs advertising Ataris and Polaroids. Another movie among many which shows that no matter what things change in the world, punks will always survive. They can be spotted at a sushi bar in an early scene and later strolling down the streets when Deckard is in hot pursuit of a female replicant. Pris (Daryl Hannah) might be the most iconic new waver ever to appear in a respected film. She wears a dog collar, white facepaint, bleached hair and a black band of makeup sprayed across her eyes. In her first scene she sleeps in trash. True punk. (*BC*)

THE BLANK GENERATION

Dirs. Ivan Kral & Amos Poe / 1976

The first wave of East Coast punk bands play CBGB.

Amazing black-and-white footage of the Ramones, Television, Patti Smith, Richard Hell, Talking Heads (who play a primordial version of "Psycho Killer"), Blondie, and others. The viewer can really almost feel as if they were there except for the fact that the sound doesn't match up with the images. The music was obviously recorded live, and many still wonder why the filmmakers couldn't have shot and recorded the songs at the same time. Possibly 'cause it's more punk to do it the way they did. This can't be judged as a "real" film as, by all accounts, it's more of a home movie. You'll see clips from this used in every punk doc ever made, making it the Zapruder Film of early punk rock. (*BC*)

IVAN KRAL

Guitarist – PATTI SMITH GROUP
Director – *THE BLANK GENERATION ('76)*
Self – *DANCING BAREFOOT*

DAM: How did you first meet Amos Poe, Eric Mitchell and some of the other artists you'd collaborate with through the '70s?

IK: I met Amos at New Line Cinema when they were on Broadway & 13th above the *Village Voice* offices. The two of us probably comprised about 25% of Bob Shaye's entire staff at the time. I remember our various tasks, like booking John Waters' *Pink Flamingos*, which was their ONLY film at the time. I'd just left my day job at The Beatles' label Apple Records, because they didn't pay as much as New Line. I needed the extra $22 a week to buy strings, candy, film, eyeliner: whatever.

It seems like everyone else I met at a gig or party. Being in a band brought easy access to weirdos, intellectuals and artists. Playing in glam bands, opening for Kiss, and then joining Blondie, Patti Smith and Iggy Pop attracted continuous filming opportunities.

Also, occasionally, I'd join others onstage for one night; people like John Cale or David Peel or Chris Spedding or Miss Nude America, etc. And there was always a circus following them, too. All I did was point the camera and shoot. I seem to have a knack for landing in the middle of chaos.

***Night Lunch* was the first movie you made. What led up to you shooting it?**

It all came about so innocently. As a Czech immigrant, I feared being deported back to an artless life under communism. I seized any opportunity thinking it might be my last chance. It was nuts, I was writing, painting, performing, modeling, acting—anything, always thinking it would be my last hurrah before being forced back to the quasi-gulag.

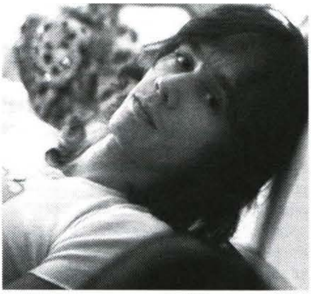
I used my dad's camera to film friends and the city. I figured the reels would be like my diary of America. Well, luckily, I didn't get deported, I'm still here, and those friends in the films became famous. I brought the films to work—some were from my days at Apple. Amos knew more about film than I did, and said no one wants to watch a silent film of bands onstage! He added a soundtrack, did some editing and I believe *Night Lunch* premiered in New York in 1975. I think I was touring Europe or something, so I didn't really see it on the "big screen."

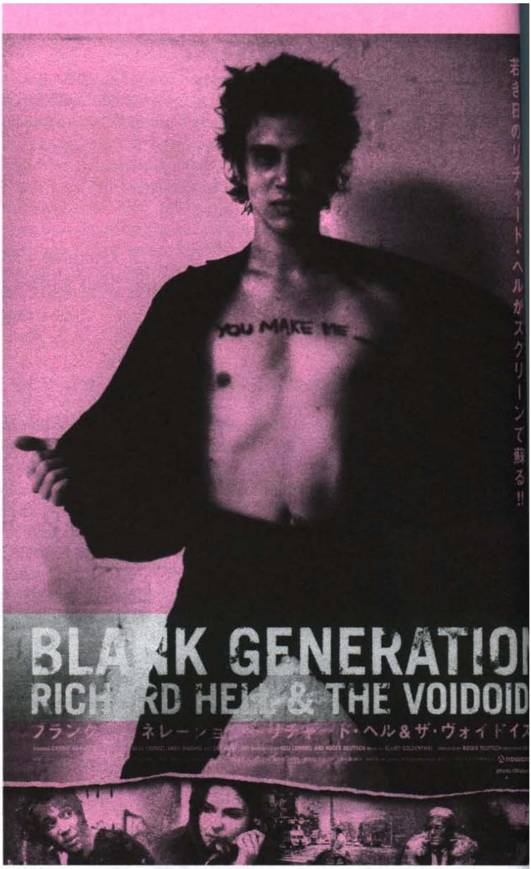
How was *The Blank Generation* received by the documented bands' audiences?

I was always on the road, so I didn't see many of the screenings, but apparently they were full. I love receiving emails from fans who recall seeing it in the '70s. I feel a bit humbled, because again, I was extremely lucky to be at the right place at the right time. Amos became more synonymous with it because I was always on the road or in the studio.

***Unmade Beds* and *The Foreigner* were the first films you were credited as composer on. Was the experience of scoring for film something that felt natural, or did it take some getting used to?**

Composing feels natural, and creatively comes in cycles. I remember a lot of sleepless nights composing for *The Foreigner* on my upright piano at 46 Bank St. It was done on a two track reel-to-reel and I was experimenting with all these electronic gizmos. Some nights I'd write songs for Patti or Debbie or really anyone, but they wouldn't make it onto an album or even a demo. I think I may have used some unrecorded Patti stuff as a launch pad for some *Unmade Beds* ideas. I also toyed around with a primitive synthesizer. I'd give the tapes to Amos and he'd work his magic.




若き日のリチャード・ヘルがスクリーンで蘇る!!
YOU MAKE ME
BLA K GENERATIO
RICH RD HE & THE VOIDOID
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BLANK GENERATION

Dir. Ulli Lommel / 1980

A musician is demolished by romance.

Prolific German entertainer Lommel has been everything: from a leading man for Rainer Werner Fassbinder, to a Warhol protégé, to a one-man straight-to-video horror factory. The writer/director/actor spent the late '70s in New York, where he found himself intrigued by the punk scene at its zenith, and collaborated with Robert Madero and star Richard Hell on a project to represent what he considered a junction of art and music.

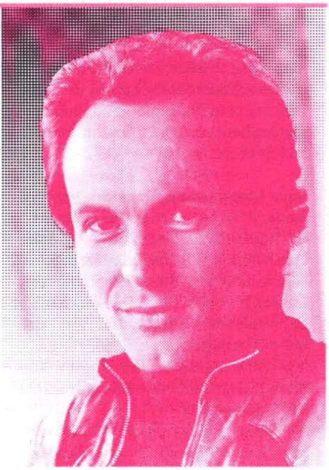
The opening credits scroll across a Times Square neon screen, brazenly declaring the film's setting and aesthetic. French Journalist Nada (Carole Bouquet) arrives to conduct an in-studio interview with rock artist Billy (Hell), and is immediately enraptured as he plays Voidoids song "New Pleasure." The two form an unstructured relationship that easily devolves, damaging his will to write and perform. Still, the band's popularity increases, and a group of punk barcrawlers can barely maintain their practiced disinterest during the show. Billy's emotional struggles neuter his ability to enjoy his success, especially when Nada leaves him for Hoffritz (Lommel), a former boyfriend of greater financial means. The dejected singer moves into a cramped musician's loft opposite the hall from New Cinema luminary Eric Mitchell in a passing role.

The characters flounder through their lives in search of anything that inspires them, pausing only to compromise one another's quest for validation. Nada interviews Andy Warhol, Billy alternates between abandoning and reigniting his rock career, and Hoffritz finds new ways to complicate everyone's lives, including his own.

Though Lommel had placed himself on the front line of the New York scene, the film carries the detachment of an observer rather than a participant, seemingly less personal than similar works of the era like Susan Seidelman's *Smithereens*, which also starred Hell playing a variation on himself. Shot in '78, this preceeded *Cocaine Cowboys* as Warhol's first film as "producer" for Lommel, with practically the entire soundtrack by Richard Hell and The Voidoids. (ZC)

ULLI LOMMEL

Director – *BLANK GENERATION ('80)*



UL: I had spent lots of time at CBGBs with Andy Warhol, watching the Ramones and Blondie. And then came Richard Hell and I fell in love with his poetry. And I was a big fan of the Sex Pistols and I also hung out with William Burroughs, the first punk of them all. I lived at the Chelsea Hotel in Manhattan, the punk rock hotel.

DAM: What experiences of yours led to *Blank Generation*?

People behaving bourgeois in Europe where I grew up. Watching people being pretentious and social-climbing. I used to pick up girls by asking them: "How do you spell bourgeois?" I told them I was a poet and that I was doing some writing on the subject. It was a great pick-up line.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Dir. Hugh Wilson / 1999

Brendan Fraser emerges from yet another subterranean time capsule, but this time realizes the '90s are terrible.

Los Angeles is a toilet. But, apparently things were still pretty nice in 1962 when Calvin and Helen Webber lived there. This is your average Cold War-era couple: traditional, conservative and pants-wettingly fearful of Russians. As news of the Cuban Missile Crisis reaches Calvin (Christopher Walken), he hurries his very pregnant wife (Sissy Spacek) to their fallout shelter to wait out the impasse. But a freak accident causes the security locks to engage, sentencing them to 35 years of captivity. Helen has no choice but to give birth to their son, Adam, in the bunker, where he is raised under the standards of 1950s civility.

While they live their lives oblivious to the realities of the outside world, LA continues to grow and evolve, as evidenced by the building constructed on top of the shelter. In 1965, it opens as Mom's Milkshakes, where everything is served up with a smile and a "gee swell." A decade later, Mom is chucking mugs of beer to hippies and burnouts. Flash forward to the '90s, and it's a flyer-encrusted hovel for leather-clad losers and spiky-haired lowlifes run by a Manson Family reject.

It is into this world that Calvin emerges once the locks open; everything around him is in disrepair and Cypress Hill blasts out over a cacophony of car alarms. He weaves through tranny hookers, garbage-eating hobos and vomiting mutants before running back home. Calvin decides to keep the family underground, but knows they must replenish their supplies, so Adam (Fraser) volunteers to go out in search of the nearest Costco.

Adam is charming as a walking anachronism, spurting out adorable gaffes like, "Oh my lucky stars, a negro!" Plus he's intelligent, polite and respectful of women. Why, *he's* the mutant in the commitment-phobic, prefab strip mall, ADD culture of the '90s. His love interest, Eve (Alicia Silverstone), however, fits right in as a thoroughly modern (read: self-centered) LA girl; suffering from the timeless cinematic affliction of only liking the nice guy once other girls show interest. (*LAF*)

BLITZKRIEG BOP

Dir. uncredited / 1978

An adult's eye view of New York's burgeoning CBGB club scene via key groups Blondie, the Dead Boys and the Ramones.

Gorgeous 16mm footage of the bands at their peak is initially sideswiped by a misguided, intense Howard Cosell-style narrator who rants about the music's financial feasibility and how Elvis and James Dean were "the first punks." Band managers and young journalists are interviewed as well as the musicians themselves. The Ramones are framed as demigod innovators, despite their self-effacing statements about their early shows, but the segments from their live sets are unarguably inspiring. CBGB founder and Dead Boys manager Hilly Kristal speaks on the violence inherent to the movement, and Robert Christgau of *The Village Voice* boldly states that the immediacy and general attitude of punk "could lead to fascism." Though nothing is shown to support his statement, there is some upsetting footage, namely when Dead Boys frontman Stiv Bators blows his nose and eats the mucus mid-song. The doc inadvertently takes a detached view of punk as a cultural aberration, but there's enough power in its subjects to make it a compelling chronicle. (*ZC*)

BLOOD AND CONCRETE

Dir. Jeffrey Reiner / 1991

Billy Zane and his arched eyebrow solve a mystery.

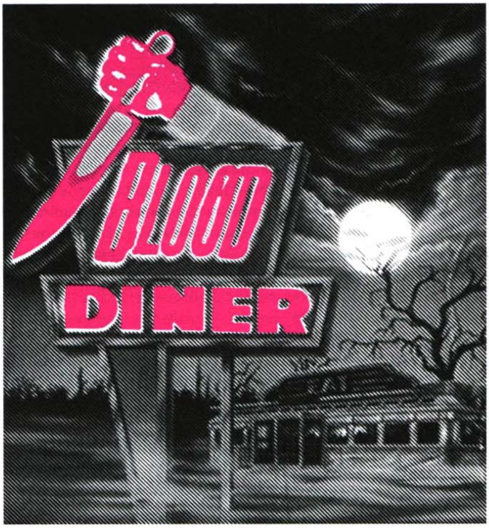
Joey Turks (Zane) is a hard-luck no-goodnik who's worn out his welcome in LA. Friendless and hopeless, he finds himself stumbling through a cemetery with a stab wound, where he accidentally interrupts the weekly suicide attempt by Mona (Jennifer Beals). She's a self-loathing neon cabaret performance artist with an obsessive grunge boyfriend named Lance (James LeGros), and Joey is instantly transfixed by her self-destructive charms. What follows is a who-did-what-to-whom parade of bit characters and loosely-tied plot twists that never congeals into anything exciting, rational or watchable. The one saving grace is the late, always-incredible Darren McGavin as Detective Hank Dick, a foul-mouthed soldier of the old guard who doesn't hesitate to shatter Joey's face against a urinal. A black mohawk and green flying squirrel 'do are among the coiffures of the jet-setting glam trash at Mona's club. Also, the guitarist in Lance's band has an indescribably wack-ass method of expressing himself visually. Though there are members of actual LA new wave groups on display (including the tragically revamped Wall of Voodoo), the film's score consists almost entirely of brutally irritating Caucasian jazz. *Blood and Concrete* temporarily threatened to pick up a minor cult following, but in the end it's just another in the long list of "quirky" independent '90s comedies about guns and romance. (*ZC*)

BLOOD DINER

Dir. Jackie Kong / 1987

Two brothers are guided by the brain of their favorite occult uncle to find a virgin and prepare a blood buffet to raise the goddess Sheetar.

An H.G. Lewis/Doris Wishman-inspired gem by mysterious lady director Kong. Who is this Kong woman? All of her films are kooky and brilliant (*Night Patrol, The Being*) but she's never



mentioned along any other '80s exploit-o-fun directors like Jim Wynorski, Frank Henenlotter or Fred Olen Ray. Why not? This might be one of the most all-out bonkers gore films of the video era. The death scenes are outrageously creative: a nude woman is rubbed in batter, deep fried then decapitated, topless cheerleaders are shot to shit by a man in a Reagan mask, etc. The kill-crazy brothers disguise themselves as a band. One wears a dog collar and a Beatles wig while the other looks like Siegfried and/or Roy. At Club Dread, punks slam to Austin, TX band Dino Lee & the White Trash Revue. The lead singer sports a gargantuan pompadour, ladies with blue wigs dance on stage and all of this is backed by a band of Nazi musicians. *Zaaam!*

The plot is basically (and intentionally) *Blood Feast* with an injection of '80s insanity. What's *not* in this movie with its kung fu nudity, ventriloquist fry cooks, wrestling Hitler and mambo-induced car fatalities?! Oh, Ms. Kong, where are you? Come out of your hiding place, make some more goddamn movies and save us all! *(BC)*

BLOOD HOOK

Dir. Jim Mallon / 1987

In a friendly fishing community, people are getting killed instead of the sea life.

The video box describes all of our young protagonists as being new wave. This is a lie. With a torn white T-shirt and a fish hook in his ear, Rodney (Patrick Danz) is the only counterculture character present. He complains about his friend's Red Echoes tape playing on the car stereo. He calls it hippie music and says it "makes him feel like he is full of chowder." It's never clear exactly what the hell he's talking about: vomit...actual chowder...New England or Manhattan?? Rodney works in mysterious ways. His favorite band is the Dead Dentists and when his buddy asks him why the fish they catch have tags on them, Rodney replies: "This is the '80s man. Everybody's doing it, wearing cool shit...even fish, man." Tune the movie out after the killer is shown. Most slasher films end five minutes after this reveal, while this one goes on for another 30. Also tune out Rodney's shirt at the start of the movie; it's covered in multicolored rectangles and not even Stevie Wonder would pretend to like it. Check out this factoid: director Jim Mallon helped to create *Mystery Science Theater 3000* and voiced Gypsy the robot. Now check out this boner-toid: Patrick Danz went on to do art direction for softcore sex films like *Midnight Temptations 2* and *Red Shoe Diaries 9: Slow Train*. *(BC)*

BLOOD ORGY OF THE LEATHER GIRLS

Dir. Meredith Lucas / 1988

A group of tough women use severe violence to get back at the men of the world.

Produced by Jon Jost and dedicated to Susan B. Anthony, this film was made on a super low budget and feels a lot like the old John Waters or Kuchar Brothers films. If the Nazi imagery doesn't get you riled up, maybe the footage of actual childbirth will. "I'm stoked on murder," one of the women shouts. The ladies beat up a man in a Super Dad T-shirt and stick a power drill up a punk's ass. The movie also features a jacket with a Misfits logo painted on the back. *Blood Orgy* could be considered an artsploitation film due to its meaty violence balanced with gorgeous shots of the beach and the American road. Also features great footage of a drive-in theater. Freak out to the LSD trip scene that incorporates fake owls. *(BC)*

BLOODFIGHT

aka FINAL FIGHT

Dir. Shuji Goto / 1989

A series of events leads to a battle supreme between two high-kicking experts.

Lots of fast-moving combat scenes, accompanied by that deeply satisfying, wet-smacking sound that these films are famous for. All of the actors seem to have learned their English dialogue phonetically. One actress in particular talks like a drunk, broken robot. The evil gang in this film is too wild. One member dresses in red and has a matching mohawk. Another wears a jewel-encrusted denim jacket and has a neon yellow streak through his red-speckled hair. The craziest dude is a baldy with the words "Don't Touch" written on one single, exposed ass cheek. These rough-and-tumble rapscallions rip it up whenever possible. They ride haphazardly through town in a jeep with "Fuck You" spraypainted on the back. These jerks steal food and beat the hell out of people with no rhyme or reason, all the while acting as if they're truly having the most awesome time of their lives. *(BC)*

BLOODY KIDS

aka ONE JOKE TOO MANY

Dir. Stephen Frears / 1979

Two juvenile delinquents stage a fake stabbing just to see how the police react.

Leo and Mike are two bored 11-year-old troublemakers with Paul Weller haircuts who decide to fake a public brawl in which one stabs the other. The plan is to score some police and press attention, and then reveal the joke once they've made fools out of the "establishment." But when their dramatized scuffle happens, Leo forces the more passive Mike to actually stab him, and when he gets carried off to the hospital, proceeds to invent terrible fibs about Mike's alleged psychosis. This leaves Mike on the lam, where he hooks up with some older punkish JDs led by Ken, played to shady perfection by Heavy Metal Kids' (1973-1977) singer Gary Holton.

Ken takes Mike under his wing, assuming a mentor-like role that obviously functions as some kind of ego trip. But instead of protecting the kid, he keeps throwing him into more potentially dangerous situations that include vandalism, car-theft and skipping on the check at restaurants. Caught between the compulsive Leo and the increasingly unstable Ken, Mike realizes he needs to get away and clear his name. But, truth be told, Mike's just a weak-willed person, and he won't get far.

Future Academy-Award nominee George Fenton's overbearing rock score seems way more epic than the bleak events unfolding onscreen—but it really works in creating a foreboding atmosphere that complements Frears' nihilistic study of delinquency and unfocused aggression.

Punk plays a contentious role in the film, because there are two varieties: those of the Malcolm McLaren variety and those under the NYC boho influence. Ken takes every opportunity to put down the multicolored "Christmas Tree" punks, hissing that "they change their hairstyle every bloody week. They don't even know what they were before. They have no idea...about anything!" His diatribe is even more resonant considering that this contrast played out in real life as well; Johnny Rotten could be spotted at Heavy Metal Kids' shows emphatically booing them, even though he was a closet fan of the group.

Holton may not be a big name stateside, but the Johnny Thunders-lookalike was a pretty legendary figure in the UK pre-punk scene. He was offered the job of fronting AC/DC after Bon Scott died, but turned it down in favor of collaborating with Casino Steele of the Hollywood Brats, and the two had a hit with a punk cover of Kenny Rogers' "Ruby (Don't Take Your Love to Town)." Holton also had bit parts in *Quadrophenia* and *Breaking Glass*, and in 1985, while filming the popular TV show *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, he died of morphine and alcohol poisoning. (*KJ*)

BODY DOUBLE

Dir. Brian De Palma / 1984

A man sublets a friend's house and bears witness
to a brutal murder.

De Palma goes purposely over the top here, pushing the sex and violence to entertaining new heights. It's his homage to *Rear Window*, *Vertigo* and porn. It makes you want to take a shower, but it's guaranteed that you'll be smiling while you do it. Bill Maher lookalike Craig Wasson plays Jake, an actor who can only get work as a punk vampire in a film called *Vampire's Kiss* (no relation to the Nicolas Cage feature). Jake is a hero of a different sort; he pulls a woman's used panties out of the trash, after which we watch him stalk her for 20 minutes. Wasson plays it all very believably and stays likeable, despite his creepy shortcomings. The infamous large-drill-through-the-chest scene is mighty impressive. Even though it's all very severe, De Palma is more subtle than usual with his style. No split screen or fancy over-the-head shots...just good old-fashioned tight filmmaking. The mystery isn't too hard to figure out and the last act is a little preposterous, but we do get Frankie Goes to Hollywood doing "Relax" on a porn set while a herd of punks dance around. This might be De Palma's most underrated film. (*BC*)

BODY MELT

Dir. Philip Brophy / 1993

An experimental new health drug turns human bodies into soup.

An illegally-manufactured serum is being tested on the unwitting residents of a rural Australian township. All seems to be going according to plan, except when the compound turns people into heaps of liquefied gory flesh. The plot wanders recklessly, and the film is best enjoyed as a sequence of shorts. The drug causes a businessman to hallucinate questionably steamy bedroom mirages. A gas-station attendant named Pud owns a parrot that wears a sweater embroidered with the word "SEXY." Pud's inbred offspring grin and drool, and his daughter has an experimental version of intercourse that stirs up more fluids than expected. An adolescent girl calls her little brother "a wienerdick." Two scabby nigh-crustpunks make out in a mall. Overall, *Body Melt* is a catalog of goopy, tendrilized viscera and autonomous snotballs, and everything degenerates into various stewpiles until the movie ends abruptly at a tellingly short running time. Truly, a goddamn mess. (*ZC*)

BODY ROCK

Dir. Marcelo Epstein / 1984

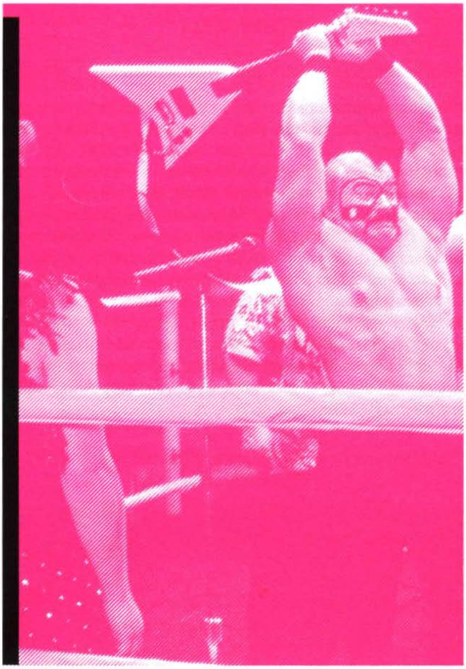
A rags-to-riches-to-rags breakdance fairytale.

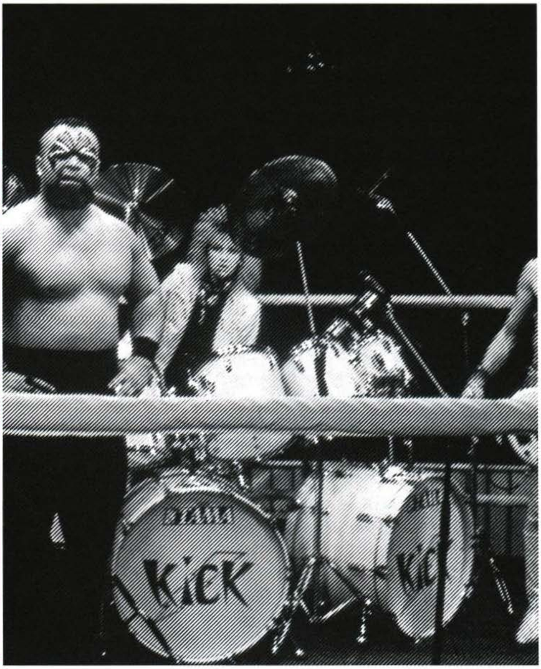
If you're hungry for a stirring document of the fledgling East Coast b-boy scene, there are many to choose from. *Wild Style*, *Krush Groove* and even the original *Breakin'* are alive with inspiring footage, and transport you to the birth of a tangible shift in American youth culture, where dance, hip-hop and fashion were forever transformed via innovative blue-collar pioneers.

Body Rock has nothing to do with that.

Lorenzo "Snake Eater" Lamas is Chilly D, an enterprising but unemployed graffiti artist who hangs out with the most ragtag—and mustachioed—breakdancing crew in New York. Clad in eye-gouging get-ups (neon orange is a particular favorite), these pop-and-lock goombahs roam the city streets, busting moves and looking "fresh." Chilly's #1 pal E-Z (Cameron Dye, who played punk companion Fred in *Valley Girl*) is a master DJ who spins beats for the crew at their dance-off hangout. The star of the group is 11-year-old Magick, a true prodigy with an ever-present smile and a mastery of the breakdancing arts. Before a big audition, he teaches Chilly the basic moves in an incredible montage that culminates at the Brooklyn Zoo, as animals watch the boys exhibit fine street style. At the audition, a studs-n-leather punk is barely visible among the throng of beatriders, and high-steppin' art rep Terrence (Ray Sharkey) leads an entourage that includes a semi-mohawked society dame. Chilly is hired to perform in an exclusive club, where he debuts with an absolutely unhinged black light routine that may permanently scar your reality with its electric lipstick, nunchucks and iridescent skeleton attacks.

Chilly's fame inevitably goes to his head, as evidenced by a cocky stroll down his tenement block where he turns to the camera and declares, "It's a live ride." Separated from his true friends in the Body Rock Crew, he begins planning his first album. He tells Terrence, "I want Prince, Eddie Van Halen and Ringo. You gotta get me Ringo, man." He dons sequined facepaint to perform a low-impact sex rap with geisha bondage dancers gyrating around him. The lyrics: "I'm gonna stick you like an animal and eat you like a cannibal and make your body pay." After the show, Chilly's fancy new friends take him out to a gay leather club, where our, uh, hero is infuriated by the homosexuality on display, and punches out his male employer when he tries to steal a kiss. Chilly is later confused as to why this affects





his position with the company: "Screw him! He kissed me!" His bout of paranoid rage is treated as purely natural and leads Chilly back to his friends, making *Body Rock* the most guiltlessly homophobic movie you'll ever see about lipstick-wearing spandex-clad male dancers. (*ZC*)

BODY SLAM

Dir. Hal Needham / 1987

The world of professional wrestling is not for sissies.

Dirk Benedict (Face from TV's *The A-Team*) is Harry Smilak, a fast-talking music promoter who ends up embroiled in the topsy-turvy wrestling industry, and in the bad graces of Captain Lou Morano (played by the multifaceted Captain Lou Albano). With the help of Rowdy Roddy Piper, The Tonga Kid and fictional patriotic glam band Kick, Smilak invents Rock 'n' Wrestling. Other familiar fightin' faces include "Classy" Freddie Blassie, Nature Boy Ric Flair and The Iron Sheik. A villainous competing promoter is portrayed by dwarf superstar Billy Barty, who calls Smilak "a faggot" on a wrestling show hosted by Charles Nelson Reilly!! Other awkward jokes include references to a Jewish yodeling competition and an artificial insemination theme night. Pretty uneven work from the usually dependable director of *Cannonball Run*, *Smokey & the Bandit* and *Megaforce*. A frosty-spiked leather punk cheers a bloody bout where diabolical mohawked cro-mags Hammer & Axe make short work of the competition. Look for the clearly mentally disabled wrestling patron attempting to clap along with Kick's rocking performance at the film's pulse-pounding climax. (*ZC*)

BOOTY CALL

Dir. Jeff Pollack / 1997

Bunz (Jamie Foxx) and Rushon (Tommy Davidson) find it's not easy to get laid in this wacked-out sex comedy.

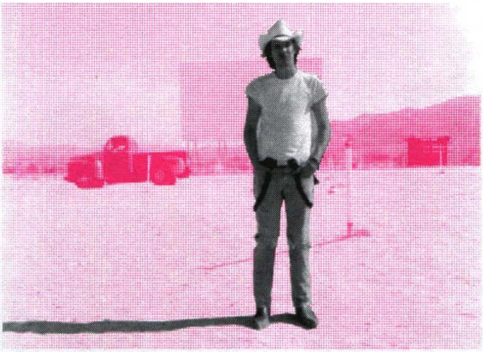
Offensive scenes abound, such as when Academy Award-winner Foxx gets his ass licked by a dog. This film supposedly teaches safe sex, but in one part a glove is used as a condom. Who'd have thought that this film would feature punks? They show up in a convenience store and don't do shit. One has huge spikes. They are pretty much the only white people in this movie. Furthermore, who could have predicted that Oscar magnet Foxx would sink so low as to do a Martin Luther King, Jr. impression while boning? The temporarily respected entertainer also does a sublime Bill Cosby as he goes down on a lady. (*BC*)

BORDER RADIO

Dirs. Allison Anders, Dean Lent & Kurt Voss / 1987

The wife of a missing musician travels across the Mexican border in an attempt to make sense of her life.

A movie that was four years in the making, *Border Radio* is a *laissez-faire* drama and an entertaining 16mm panorama of LA's aging punk movement. Flesh Eaters frontman Chris D. plays Jeff, an introspective Hollywood musician at the height of his career who's forced to cross into Mexico in the aftermath of shady dealings. His wife Lu (Slash Magazine writer Luanna Anders) and 7-year-old daughter Devon (co-director Anders' daughter) are left behind in the modest



family home, where the walls are covered with flyers for incredible rock shows featuring bands with names like The Bags, The Plugz, Suburban Lawns and The Weirdos in every nook and cranny. Jeff's drunken colleague Dean (John Doe of X in the first of many film roles) is cornered at an abandoned drive-in by a trio of heavies who argue about The Clash's social relevance en route to their next "hit." Pseudo-best friend to Jeff is Chris (Chris Shearer), a self-serving goofball who sleeps with Lu, makes cartoon noises and is despised by everyone onscreen.

As you'd expect, there are plenty of familiar faces. Rock luminary Dave Alvin (The Blasters) chats with Lu at the legendary Hong Kong Café, where Tony Kinman of The Dils makes a brief cameo. Tex and the Horseheads singer Texacala Jones is later on hand as Devon's zoned-out babysitter.

In a possible nod to *The Decline of Western Civilization*, the film is segmented by interviews with various characters discussing Jeff's unnamed band and mysterious disappearance. The self-proclaimed groupie in these segments is writer/actual LA scenester Iris Berry. The soundtrack is performed by Dave Alvin, The Lazy Cowgirls, Flesh Eaters, Green on Red and John Doe, and some of Alvin's instrumental score later somehow landed in Oliver Stone's *Wall Street*.

Interestingly, the project wasn't written as a rock film and only became one when Chris D. was cast in the lead, and it was largely D. who shanghaied Doe and Alvin into the project. Filmmakers Voss and Anders met in junior college, then transferred to UCLA where they eventually partnered up with Lent and began shooting Border Radio on a $2000 budget. Several years and tens of thousands of dollars later, the result showcases all of their art school interests without ever slipping into pretension. Certain moments are cinematically downright beautiful, including slow sweeping shots of the barren Mexican waterfront. *(ZC)*

ALLISON ANDERS

Director – *BORDER RADIO*

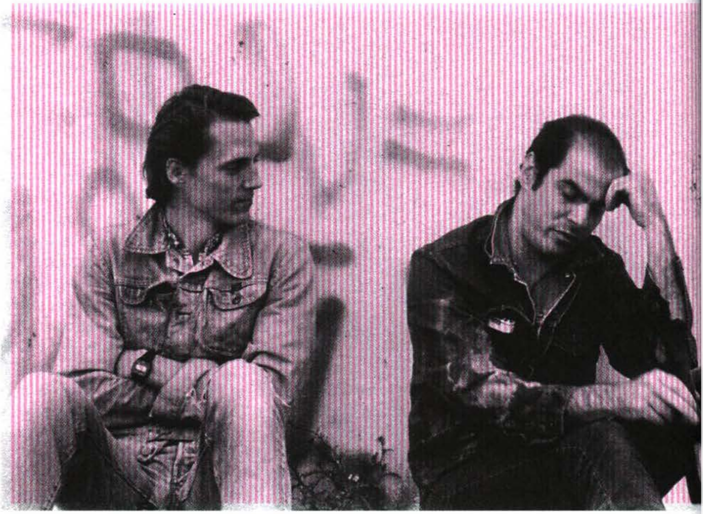
DAM: Who came up with the basic premise of *Border Radio*? You guys all share credit, but I wondered where this story really started.

AA: It's pretty funny because we had just all made our second short at UCLA. We went down to Baja, CA, down to Ensenada to see this trailer that an old boyfriend of mine owned on the beach. And here we are, we had just finished our movie, and you'd think we'd be relaxing, but we're all instantly going, "We should make something here, we should make something at this trailer"—which, of course, we ended up using in *Border Radio*. But we're like, OK, what's the story going to be? Kurt was like, "It's a guy alone down here," and to me it was, "It's a couple." And Dean was like: "It's two men," because Dean is gay. So we each had our different approaches about how it should be. In a weird way, I think Kurt and I kind of won out there. Because we do have Chris D. down there, but eventually it was sort of about a couple, but not quite in the romantic way that I thought of.

Then we had to figure out what we were gonna do from there and who was going to be in this movie...who could we get? Chris Shearer had been in my second short film, Luanna—my sister—had been in each of our films and there was this other guy that Dean had worked with that we originally thought of for the lead, but that wasn't working out. I started thinking about Chris D. because Kurt was really a big fan of The Flesh Eaters. But we didn't know any of those people. I knew some in the art punk scene...Monitor and Human Hands and people like that, but I didn't know the whole John Doe, Flesh Eaters, Gun Club crowd at all. We went to see these bands, and we were in awe of them, but we didn't know them.

The question became: how do we get to Chris D.? Kurt really liked the idea, of course, so we go to the club where The Flesh Eaters were playing. And Chris D. just kind of...I rallied this guy named Craig Rude who was a friend of ours and was in the band Billy Wisdom. He ends up being in the movie too. So I asked him if he'd give our script to Chris D., and I just remember looking from the back of the club, watching Craig talking to Chris D. and him turning around and looking at us with complete disdain. Apparently he said to Craig, "Do these people even have any money to make a movie?" And, of course we didn't! But, who cares? We were gonna make a movie.

Eventually he said yes, but the movie he agreed to was not the movie we ended



up with. And Chris D., of course, he programs the American Cinematheque, so we took on a guy who knows a lot about movies. He's a movie fanatic, and we proposed this noir story. Well, eventually, as we're making this noir picture, we realize, fuck, noir's really hard to make. We don't know how to make a fucking '40s noir movie. So we started turning it into something else. It wasn't determined yet what that something else was, but it eventually became *Border Radio*. So, that's why he named his character "Jeff Bailey," which is the character in *Out of the Past*. The great thing is that Chris D. plays it like he's in *Out of the Past* the whole time. He's convinced he's in that movie. He doesn't care what we're doing. We can make whatever movie we want, but he's doing that one. I love that; he never broke his commitment to that film. I think that's why he worked so well with it. That was the movie he said yes to, that was the movie he was gonna make.

Consequently, he got all these other people involved. He got John Doe. He got Dave Alvin. Dave Alvin got Steve Berlin. We were the first movie to ever use a Los Lobos song in a film. A really rare track of theirs, "Maria Christina," which plays over Chris D. and Chris Shearer walking on those strange dunes that look like the moon. And then Steve Berlin did the score with Dave Alvin and Texacala Jones. We got all these people involved through Chris D. Which I kind of thought might happen.

So that changed a lot of what the movie really was, when you ended up having all these musicians in it?

Well, that's the thing. Once there were all these musicians involved, it just seemed like why not go for it? That's what we were interested in anyway.

You had all these people there, and you're making the movie, which took forever. What were some of the hardships that were deadly then but you can look back and laugh at now? Unless they're all too painful to recount.

The worst thing was not having any money, I mean, we personally didn't have any money, and we never had enough to get the film out of the lab once we shot it. Inevitably, we were begging somebody to help us get the film out. We knew it was eventually going to be a problem to get it all processed and get the film actually finished, so we did have somebody come in for that. And we did a 35mm blow up, which was all done with financing that we got afterwards. I think that was the hardest part...the money stuff. We did whatever it took to get that movie made.

The hardship was intense, and we were always trying to keep morale alive. Kurt and I were inevitably selling all of our albums at the record store. At that time, you could go to Rhino Records and sell your records for a pretty good price. So, we walked into Rhino one day with all the stuff we were gonna sell, including some Flesh Eaters records—we didn't want to, we had to—and there's Chris D. standing there. And it's like, "Do-do-do, la-la, everything's going well. Oh, no we're just hanging out. We just bought these, actually."

I remember being constantly nervous on the set, like I have no idea what I'm doing. Idea was just to keep doing it until it's right. Funny enough, I hadn't felt that way on my other two films, but on *Border Radio*, maybe it was because there were three of us that there was a sense of, "Oh, we have to get this right and not step on each other's toes." Because we all have very different styles. Dean is very formal; he was into Kubrick and you can tell by his shot that he has a very formal eye, very beautifully controlled. And then Kurt and I were probably closest in sensibilities, but even we had totally different idols.

For me, it's important to keep as much naturalism as possible. For me it goes into little set details that will drive me crazy if I don't have it right. All that type of stuff, we did ourselves. I was fanatical about getting flyers up on the wall and the Nuart film schedule, and just things that really made the room look like how we lived, you know, how everybody lived at that time who was in the LA film culture.

It feels like the film's kind of a tribute or love letter to that life, but also a jab. Was that deliberate? Or is that even accurate?

Yeah, I think that in a way, I felt somewhat outside of it. Like we were in it, but we were never really dyed-in-the-wool. So, having been outside of it a little, we could criticize it a little. Definitely, when you see Devon on the merry-go-round later by herself, you think well, OK, these people have been a little absent in their child's life. I think there's definitely a level of my feeling that I'd been spending all this time working on a movie and not really spending as much time with my kid. I think there was a little bit of guilt in me that came out in that.

As a result of my making films, my daughters Tiffany and Devon would just be carted around everywhere. The one good thing is that they were always with me. So when we made the movie, we would just bring the kids to the editing room and they would sleep in sleeping bags, then we'd get them up and take them for hot chocolate and pancakes and then take them to school. And then Tiffany went to a lot of shows with us. She still remembers seeing The Gun Club's Jeffrey Lee Pierce at a party that we had.

He was wearing a dress and he had his hair all bleached blond, and he was wearing a button of Debbie Harry. So Tiffany was looking at him thinking, "Why is that man eating all of our food and why is he wearing a button of himself?"

She's a musician now, and all of her idols she got to meet; I mean everybody—John Doe, Exene—she got to meet them as a child. So, I think there was something of a love letter. I don't think LA's ever gonna have that again: a rock subculture the way it was then. That was kind of the last, and there might have been a sense that it was gonna be the last.

It does come through in *Border Radio* that it's kind of at the tail end of something really great.

Yes, absolutely. Even at the time, we were really heading into the post-punk years, and certainly there were things going on after the punk scene. There were interesting bands around, but it wasn't like the world that we managed to get a little taste of, and that those characters got to live in. It wasn't like that at all. What my boyfriend always says about pop subcultures now is that they have no authority. And I think it's really true, that there's no "I'm willing to do this 100%." I don't know why that is. I mean there are probably a lot of reasons, and in some ways I feel like rock subcultures are more informed than ever. They have access to music—like when I wanted certain records back when we were making *Border Radio*, I was told they didn't even exist, or I'd have to wait 20 years to find it at a yard sale—and now you can instantly find whatever you're looking for.

When everything was finally put together, what do you feel like the reaction was from the people who were familiar with the scene and the people who had no idea what they were in for? I know it did pretty well critically, but what was kind of the gut reaction from people at large at early screenings?

Well, funny enough, people from that scene really liked the movie. I think it captured something of Los Angeles at that very moment that people could respond to. So many people go, "Oh, I was at that first *Border Radio* screening," and that's kind of amazing to me. I think people were excited to see John Doe and Chris and Dave and all the people they would go to see play at area clubs, and to see the clubs themselves and the Hollywood Rehearsal Studios. There's a lot of stuff in there, that if you know it, you'll get that much more out of it. The Rehearsal Studios are where everyone went to practice—absolutely everyone— and we really didn't have to do anything to that place. Other people didn't have a clue what to make of it. People that were not in the lifestyle had no idea what the hell this movie was. And we actually got some really funny bad reviews too. You know, "*Border Radio* gets bad reception," and things like that. That's one of our favorites.

That's pretty good. You can't even be pissed off at that.

I know. You have to say, "Touché." It definitely was made with a specific audience in mind. And I think that people who look at it now—anyone who's familiar with the LA punk scene—they're gonna mine a lot from it. It's the romance of being in Southern California and being part of that scene.

And it's an era that wasn't really represented in other movies.

Yeah, and it hasn't been since. It's kind of weird that it's not there anywhere.

That's the thing that really impresses me. There was a lot of stuff that kind of covered 1978 through 1983 or so, but this was the movie that captured that scene of people that had grown up against their will.

Right, right, exactly. And that's the thing. I think John Doe had just moved from one house, I think he and Exene had just split up. He became a father during the movie. Everyone was personally changing.

CHRIS D.

"Jeff" – *BORDER RADIO*

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CD: Allison Anders and Kurt Voss turned up at the West LA nightclub The Music Machine—now long gone—for an early date of my band Divine Horsemen in mid-to-late 1984...maybe early 1985? I can't remember the exact date. I know it was Divine Horsemen and not The Flesh Eaters because my ex-wife Julie, who was the other singer in Divine Horsemen, was standing there with me. Allison and Kurt had a rough first draft of *Border Radio*—it wasn't a full-length script, if I remember right—and asked if I'd read it and consider doing it. They said they were UCLA film grad students and were fans of mine. Kurt was really more of the fan.

The filmmakers have said it wasn't really a punk story until you became involved. How did your influence affect things?

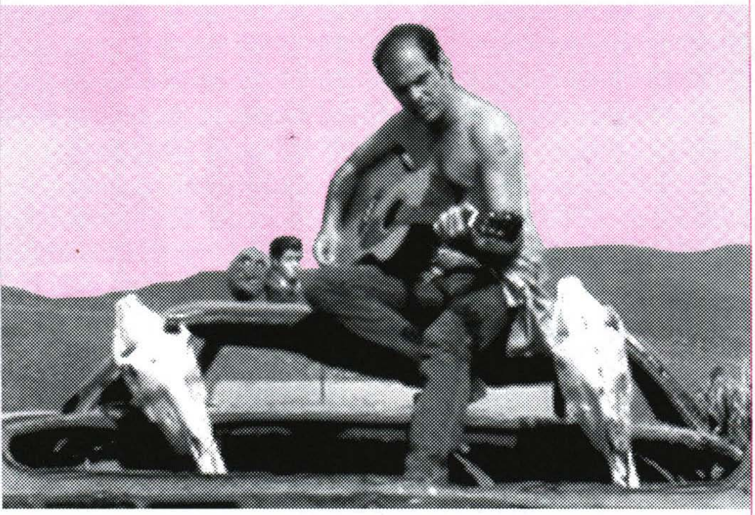
If I remember correctly, the music angle was already in the script. The movie was definitely a collaborative effort and they incorporated things from my—what might you call it? Persona, I guess—into the character. The actors all wrote a lot of their own dialogue and we'd huddle with Kurt, Allison and Dean before each scene discussing what the characters were going to do.

I was attracted to it because it originally had a much more downbeat plot than what turned up onscreen. It was a neo-noir story with not only a plot of this singer and the other guys in his band robbing the safe of a club that has ripped them off, but also a subplot about a man—me, the singer—taking his wife and family for granted until it was too fucking late. In the original story, the smarmy roadie character played by Chris Shearer is also an obsessive fan, goes off his rocker and murders my character's wife, the Luanna character, when she comes down at the end of the movie to visit one last time at the Mexican trailer hideout. That original story was dark, much darker than the finished project.

Did you feel a direct closeness to the character of Jeff, or was it more or less a role?

Yes, I felt a definite identification with the Jeff character, and as I've said we definitely took characteristics of the Chris D. persona, for lack of a better term, to flesh it out. But it was more of the Divine Horsemen Chris D., the roots rocker with a dark vision, than Chris D. the punk singer with a dark vision. Also they had named the character Jeff Bailey after the Robert Mitchum character in the late '40s noir film *Out of the Past*, which also happened to be my favorite noir film, so I was really in synch with them, on the same wavelength.

I was fairly disappointed at the time when the story took a more comedy-drama-of-manners kind of path, à la Jim Jarmusch. That happened when we had a roughly six-month hiatus because they ran out of money midway through shooting. When we started up again, the narrative had changed radically as far as its characters and storyline. It was no longer tragic or noir. In some ways, I thought it trivialized all of the characters, making them out to be fools. But that's me, I'm always into the more serious, tragic aspects of storytelling, even though I think you can still have humor, albeit dark humor, in that kind of movie. I don't think it made it a bad movie. I think there are still a lot of great things in it. But to me, it was not what it could have been. Then again, if they'd gone the total neo-noir route, maybe it wouldn't have worked in the end or be remembered today.



Do you feel the movie captures the feel of the scene at the time?

Not the early LA punk scene, but that's not what was happening then in Hollywood. The scene had kind of split into different factions by the mid-1980s when the movie was made, with the hardcore punks getting harder and more violent with the South Bay influence, and the Hollywood punk bands incorporating other influences in their music, including the occasional roots influence. The bands that ended up in the film, Green on Red and Billy Wisdom, were rootsy psychedelic and glam respectively, if you have to give them labels. The Lazy Cowgirls, who were old-school 1977 and '60s garage punk migrants from Indiana, ended up on the cutting room floor. But the movie certainly captured that kind of feel of what it was like to be living day to day in a band and trying to make ends meet and trying to have a vision and having this naïve but sincere intention of not selling out. And of course, John Doe and I were good friends in real life and were in real bands together.

You didn't act for 15 years after the film's release. Did the extended shoot put you off from working in front of the camera?

No, I loved acting and still love it. It's something that I find very easy to do. But I was never particularly ambitious about it. I went out on a lot of auditions and readings in the mid-1980s, but a lot of stuff just did not pan out. There was a very small part I could have had in *Sid and Nancy*—Victoria Thomas was ready to cast me—but it was a very hard choice, as the day they were going to shoot my part, Divine Horsemen was supposed to be doing a showcase for a bunch of record company people at a big nightclub in Hollywood. What do I do? Blow off the band's chance to maybe have a chance at getting signed? Or take this small part? I chose the band then kicked myself when none of the A&R dickheads showed up at the club. Oh well. That's show biz.

I got called back a lot by Karen Vice who was one of the casting people on the *Moonlighting* TV show. She never cast me, but she kept calling me back, so I knew she saw something in me she liked. But then in late 1987 the band blew apart and Julie and I split up, all because I could not get clean off of drugs at the time. Nobody in the movie industry knew about my drug problems, so it wasn't that, but the calls just suddenly, coincidentally stopped in 1988. And I was in no shape anyway. Though still making music, I was in my "I don't give a damn" phase till 1996 when I finally got clean. But I just hadn't pursued the acting thing. I didn't have enough luck or ambition at those crucial times when the opportunities were within reach. I'd still love to do more acting. Hint hint to any casting directors out there.

JOHN DOE

Self – *DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION*
"Dean" – *BORDER RADIO*

DAM: How did you guys become subjects in *Decline*?

JD: If they're making a movie about punk rock in the early '80s, we would be a major part of that. That's how we ended up in it. Penelope Spheeris contacted us: we arranged a time and just did it.

Even with the tattoo scene, you guys came off as the most sane and organized band in the film. Did you feel like it represented you guys well when you saw the final product?

JD: I think everybody in the film was very anxious to further their career, so you make questionable decisions when you're interested in that. We came up with the idea to tattoo each other. We had played two shows that night at the Whisky and we'd taken a little bit of speed just to stay up and we were drinking heavily, so I guess we somehow held it together. Penelope, for that movie and the subsequent movies, I think she gave people whatever they wanted and by doing that gave them enough rope to hang themselves. She got Darby high before he did his scenes, and he wasn't a great speaker to begin with, but he looks even more foolish than he would have.

It was kind of like that movie that someone did up in the Northwest where they did a narrative about this street kid?

There was a huge reaction to the film when it came out—

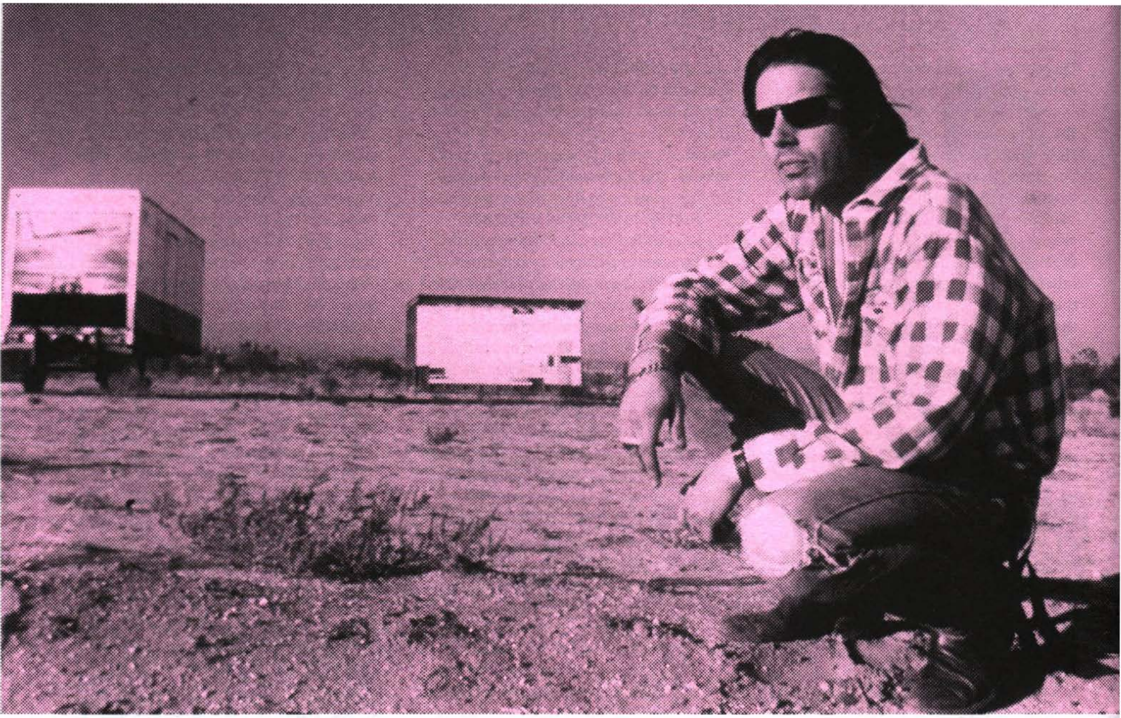
Not really, no. You can believe that, but it's not true. Maybe to certain people that had a great effect. Very small distribution...it maybe played in five or ten cities. It was cult at best.

I was thinking more in LA.

Oh, yeah. Short-lived, but I guess it had some impact.

The film was really aiming to cover what was going on in LA at that time...did it manage to do that or were there other bands who would've been better suited to be included?

I think she was very selective about who she chose because she wanted to paint this nihilistic picture of what the scene was because the movie was sensational and it would be easier to sell and have a bigger splash. But at the same time there were much more popular bands like The Go-Go's; there were much more eclectic bands like Black Randy or the Alley Cats or The Plugz; and ones that were sort of in between a new wave sound and what was punk rock. But she chose



the most sensational, most violent, most hardcore bands that she could because she knew it would draw more attention.

After that, you'd been playing with Chris D. of The Flesh Eaters. Is that how you happened to become a part of *Border Radio*?

Allison Anders was using a lot of LA musicians as her cast. Dave Alvin was part of it, and Chris, and Iris Berry and Texacala Jones. I think she liked X, maybe she had a little crush on me, or something, I don't know what. But I can say that because Allison and I have turned out to be great friends. I truly do love her.

That was the first time you played a character. Was that something that you'd already wanted to start doing?

No, I just believe in taking advantage of opportunities if they seem interesting. I never dreamed of being an actor. I'd loved movies for a long time but never thought of acting.

But then when this was offered to you it kind of kicked open that option for you?

It was very rewarding and friendly, and I realized maybe this could turn into something else, and it did to a degree. Some people have said, "Oh, you got the acting bug," and they put their fingers up and make air quotations and that kind of revolts me because I never really felt like I got that. It's creative, it's a lot of hard work—maybe more than playing music—and it was something to do.

On that movie it feels like everyone seemed to be friendly on the set. Was that the case? It feels really genuine.

It was. I actually just watched it again and it's not a bad movie, but we didn't know what the hell we were doing—the actors didn't. But obviously, Allison and Kurt and Dean Lent, the three people that put it together, did. It was very casual; there were scenes in which dialogue was never even written down. We'd just improvise and stick with that improvisation until we got a decent take of it.

The filmmakers have said that when it started it wasn't a music film. When you first got involved was it kind of going through these changes or did it already have the model that it ended up with?

I think it was probably already going that way. We knew from the beginning that Allison and Kurt were huge music fans, but we didn't know so much music was going to be included. I think Allison was one of the first to do that and it was to good effect.

While you were shooting that, you ended up being in more standard storytelling movies like *Slam Dance* and *3:15*. Did you come into those from doing *Border Radio* or did you get an agent?

The agency that booked X also had a theatrical division and there was a woman there who had put other rock 'n' rollers in films. She worked with David Bowie and David Essex and a few other English guys. She represented me on an informal basis. I think I got the job in *Slam Dance* as some sort of package deal; I don't think they actually wanted me to be in it. But it was a good opportunity, so what the hell? Doing that movie, I realized I was in so far over my head that I took some acting classes. It's a terrible feeling when you're in the middle of doing something and you realize you're being left in the dust.

KURT VOSS

Director – *BORDER RADIO*

KV: Allison Anders and Dean Lent and I were all film students at UCLA. I'd been in junior college with her, and I'd known here since I was a teen. She was actually my first girlfriend; a bit of a cradle-robber since I was 17 and she was 26 or so. We were both kinda misfits. She was already into punk and I was a little bit into it. But I was a suburban kid so I liked Neil Young and stuff like that as well as Sex Pistols records. Allison was an unabashed punk. We met with a solidarity group for political action in South America, that type of thing. Basically we were malcontents.

Some people from our political group started staging punk concerts. I was excited...I'd seen Public Image Ltd. not long before and that was a great show. I'd had long hair and I got the shit kicked out of me [laughs]. It was pretty fuckin' rough. But that was the old days.

Anyway, Allison and I were both big German film buffs. I was really into Herzog and she was really into Wim Wenders. We really revered that stuff, and you can see that in *Border Radio* pretty clearly. Some of it, like these long, crude panning shots across palm trees, is right out of *Fata Morgana*, one of Herzog's early movies. Also, the road fixation. There's a lot of that stuff in there.

DAM: How did things start moving towards *Border Radio*?

We applied to film school together and were actually both accepted, which was statistically unlikely. We made a couple of short films together with a DP named Dean Lent. We met him at the school, and we had a similar sort of aesthetic and decided we should team up and make a feature together. The teacher that set that up was a guy named Billy Woodbury, who was sort of a protégé of Charles Burnett. He really encouraged us to go for it. So pretty much with his blessing—and with him helping us sneak the camera out of the back door of the school—we decided to just jump in and shoot something.

[...This section omitted because he basically repeats content that's been covered in the Allison Anders and Chris D. interviews...]

As we went, we kind of started wondering how we were going to finish the film. I had one contact in the business... just by happenstance, my family knew a TV actor named Vic Tayback. He used to drink with my dad. So he ended up giving us the first 2000 dollars to start the movie. We shot maybe the first half hour, cut it together and took it to his house to try and get more money. He was totally nonplussed by our product. He said, "John Doe? That's the name of your star...'John Doe'?" He's staring at Chris D. on the screen, who of course has this demonic look, and he asks, "This is the good guy?" He just didn't see where we were coming from and so he couldn't help us further for that reason.

After that, we didn't have anywhere to go. We were up shit creek. Then someone said, "Maybe we can get these guys to give us songs and we can sell some kind of soundtrack deal." Back in the day, that stuff could still drive a movie. And that was how we finished; getting an advance from Enigma Records for a selection of the songs. Between that money and a television pre-sale that Wim Wenders himself helped us to secure, we were able to get the dough to cut the negative and get a mix done and everything.

So money was an ever-present issue...

We were really scraping. My parents were both solidly employed, so I was from a middle-class background. But Allison was from poverty and was used to things being hard. When I met her, she had a $60-a-month apartment in Glendale. Really small, no napkins, stuff like that [laughs]... the kind of things that you don't appreciate until you don't have them. I kind of stepped into her world from a more comfortable one to make this movie, and we really did struggle. We would spend money on sound tape rather than pay the electric bill. Then the lights went out. I don't know what the fuck we were thinking. We were just totally fuckin' gonzo...we HAD to finish this movie. It was like we were living as junkies while making the movie. We'd wake up and immediately start thinking of where we could get some money. It was really that bad.

There was a friend of a friend of ours in the philosophy department at school, and he'd won a grand somewhere. We were out driving and Allison and I saw him sitting on a bus bench, and we were like, "Oh my God. He just won some money for a paper on Sartre" or whatever [laughs]. So of course we offer him a ride, and he gets out of the car $200 poorer: we convinced him to help us get our dailies out of the lab. We had access to the work print and actually swiped it from the lab at one point out of sheer desperation. It took so long to shoot that the clothing rotted off the actors in some cases, and we'd have to match it.

We had a breakfast for the cast one day...we couldn't even afford to buy people hamburgers much less pay them, but in recognition, we'd make chorizo and eggs for like $3 and give it to the cast before we'd start shooting. I remember once when Allison was refilling John Doe's coffee cup, and he said, "You know, I wouldn't mind the cold coffee, but the roach is too much." And there really was a roach floating in the top of his cup.

The problems went all the way to when we were finishing. Dean flew out to supervise the transfer to 35mm, and the plane crashed. It crash-landed with our negative in the belly of the plane [laughs]. The stuff wasn't damaged, but damn.

BORED TEENAGERS

Dir. Wolfgang Büld / 1979

A teenage punk fan meets his heroes, for better or worse.

Adverts-obsessed, straight-laced German youth Peter plasters photos of the band all over his room, combing his hair to the beat of the titular track. He spends his days with kewpie girlfriend Karin, waiting for his favorite group to tour through the country. Peter practices rudimentary English skills in his bedroom mirror in case he meets his idols, then stumbles across them sitting in the local diner. The male members of the band are much more interested in Karin than him, but the entire gang ends up backstage for communication breakdowns and beer. Their show goes well, the band knocking out "Gary Gilmore's Eyes" and others as the young crowd engages in surprisingly neighborly dance moves, but the Adverts end up at the police station after a confrontation with the club promoter. After further difficulties, they resort to bunking out at Peter's apartment, creating the expected beer-soaked mess before their second German gig. The audience for this follow-up show is more traditionally punk in their attitude, dress and willingness to pogo.

Afterwards, the group somehow drifts into a soul-crushing disco, where several interpersonal errors are made in a beautifully staged drunken spiral that carries over into the daylight. The band's final German tour stop is a properly packed blowout, as a hall full of eager fans throbs to the film's best performance.

The Adverts footage is perfectly shot, similar to what Büld accomplished in his *Punk in London* documentary. Made for German television, this was the director's first narrative feature and is handled extremely well; or at least the non-actors of the punk cast manage to avoid looking at the camera too often. (ZC)

BORN IN FLAMES

Dir. Lizzie Borden / 1983

A proto-riot grrrl alternate-future tale.

At an unspecified date a few years from tomorrow, society is on the downhill slide from a modest equalitarian socialist apex. The Women's Army has formed to stabilize an imperfect culture, leading to distrust and condemnation from politicians and their placated followers. Working women are suddenly labeled feminist extremists and fired, while anti-rape groups are treated as rabid vigilantes. Any attempt to organize female-friendly unions results in a media assault, but the women have no choice but to carry forward through what eventually becomes a conspiratorial martyring. The more they're marginalized, the more militant and confrontational their approach becomes, until they ultimately fulfill their roles as terrorists by staging an explosive attack on none other than the World Trade Center.

Half a decade in the making, Borden's mammoth social morality epic emerged as a brazenly self-made masterpiece. The film is so obviously anchored in its creators' actual beliefs that it's hard to consider it a narrative feature, even more so due to the conviction of the amateur leads. Most impressive is Jean Satterfield as The Women's Army's resigned spokesperson. Familiar actors Mark Boone Jr., Eric Bogosian and even renowned director Kathryn Bigelow make appearances as well.

Born in Flames doesn't offer much in the way of immediately identifiable punks, but the aggressive female empowerment battle cry in unmistakably similar to the core of the riot grrrl movement. So is the film's anti-media broadcast group Radio Ragazza (Italian for "girl"), who play intense live sets as a rock band when not operating as a street crew. Their music itself is more poetry slam than street anthem, but the venom is consistent with the most furious and sincere punk. Additional soundtrack by Red Crayola and The Bloods. *(ZC)*

BORN TO LOSE

Dir Doug Cawker / 1999

Stevie Monroe, lead singer of punk band The Spoilers, wallows
in a destructive dating relationship while circulating
his band's demo tape in Los Angeles.

Shot on digital video, this low-budget indie features lots of drugs, leather jackets and other punk clichés, as well as way too many groan-inducing *Sid and Nancy* references. There's nothing new here, but it does manage to realistically capture the desperation of bands to make it big. Too bad it all looks like a Troma movie without the ketchup and silicone. The soundtrack, which was released on Bomp! Records, features The Lazy Cowgirls, The Zeros, The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs and "Tight Pants" by The Stooges. *(KK)*

BORN TO LOSE: THE LAST ROCK N' ROLL MOVIE

Dir. Lech Kowalski / 1999

Long-unreleased doc about former New York Dolls
guitarist Johnny Thunders.

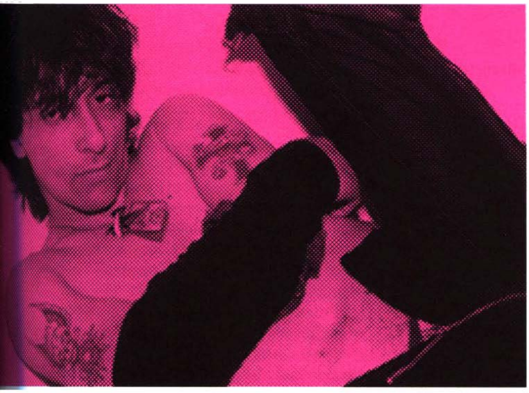
In a fitting preview of the way director Kowalski (*D.O.A.*) creates analogies and contrasts through editing, the film opens with Jayne County (formerly Wayne County) performing "Rock 'n Roll Resurrection" as John Anthony Genzale, aka Johnny Thunders, stumbles into view looking like death. The former New York Dolls guitarist is the film's subject, and while the chronology and geographical orientation are dodgy, it's clearly meant to be an anecdotal and musical history of Johnny Thunders rather than a document following a straight trajectory. The film is loaded with lengthy performances spanning Thunders' career—from the Dolls through the Heartbreakers, Gang War and subsequent solo work—up until his death, as well as colorful interviews from former band members, relatives and fellow junkies (a few of whom nod off during their interviews). Dee Dee Ramone is on hand to give props to Thunders in an interview session that would form the basis of Kowalski's 2003 doc *Hey! Is Dee Dee Home?*

None of the Dolls are interviewed, including Thunders himself, whose only voice in the film is his music. But his deterioration is apparent, as the young ladies' man and guitar prodigy becomes a pasty, feeble skeleton with hollow black eyes and arms full of scabs. When he died in 1991, the only surprise was that he had lasted that long. His death was ruled a heroin overdose, but alternate suspicions that his death was the result of foul play are not addressed in the film

Although initially hailed as one of the most promising and original guitarists to emerge from a decade oversaturated with yawn-inducing virtuosos, he became known more for being fucked up on stage and provoking fights than for his musical proficiency. But one-time Heartbreakers manager and legendary punk photographer Leee Black Childers says of the legendary group: "They were monsters. But on stage they were the most brilliant rock 'n' roll band going." As with many musical visionaries, his personal life would come to overshadow his talent. Thunders was an unrepentant addict—he mimics shooting up on stage, and at one point in the film serenades a group of girls in a hotel room with a syringe stuck in his hair like a flower—further fuel for the misled notion that heroin is something romantic, an idea sadly held over from the numerous jazz musician addicts in the '40s and '50s.

A third of the way into the film, Johnny's drug habit takes center stage and stays there. He's shown scoring and nodding off (a particularly painful sequence has him trying to light a cigarette *forever*) but not actually shooting up. Given the state Thunders is in, it would have been very easy for Kowalski to exploit him, but he never does. He shows enough to get the point across then leaves it to the viewer's imagination. Former street-punk hustler and one-time *Punk Magazine* publisher John Spaceley, who returns from Kowalski's *Gringo* (1984), does not get the same treatment.

Spaceley first appears coming out of the bathroom in a hospital, emaciated and immobile after being diagnosed with AIDS in 1992. It is obviously difficult for him to speak, but he gives an interview anyway. We later see him being put in a morgue freezer. Although Spaceley quit smack some years before he found out he had AIDS, it's disturbing to watch *Gringo* and *Born to Lose* back to back.



This rarely-seen documentary had a similar fate to that of *MC5: A True Tesimonial* (without the happy ending of that lengthy court case): after years of production, it was yanked from release by someone who owned partial music rights. And, like that film, screeners had already been sent out to festivals and leaked into the bootleg market. Ironically, the decade following the projected release of *Born to Lose* saw a proliferation of Dolls-related films that have been released without incident on the music-rights front. (*KJ*)

THE BORROWER

Dir. John McNaughton / 1991

An alien criminal must commandeer a fresh head
every 24 hours to survive on our planet.

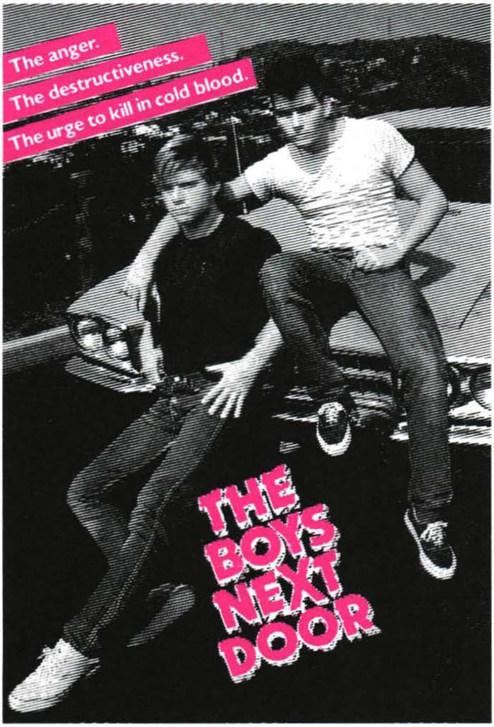
It's just one man's opinion, but this no-brow ripoff of *The Hidden* could feature the best performance of Rae Dawn Chong's entire career. An insectopoid alien is imprisoned and his transport unit ends up crash-landing on Earth. A couple of curious hillbillies investigate the wreckage. Two homicides later, the alien has adopted a fresh human head and prowls the city streets. He's picked up by a rocker girl who gives him a pair of raging jazzercise sunglasses. Soon, he befriends the kind-hearted Julius (Antonio "Huggy Bear" Fargas), learns to speak jive and spits a chewed-up rat on a pushy hobo. Diana Pierce (Chong) is hot on the trail of the head-pilfering extraterrestrial, but the cat-and-mouse plotline isn't nearly as entertaining as the superfluous gags: a married couple watches *The Garbage Pail Kids Movie* in bed; the creature has psychedelic hallucinations while a bleached liberty-spiked punk gives him the once-over; and a music video taping of talentless noisebags The Screwheads is interrupted when they're attacked by the alien sporting a dog's face. Wheeee!!! An unexpected follow-up to McNaughton's decidedly less zany video age classic *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*. (*ZC*)

THE BOYS NEXT DOOR

Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1985

Two high school friends take off for Los Angeles after graduation
and start a violent crime spree that leaves them barricaded in a
deserted shopping mall, hunted by authorities.

Even with a cast of soon-to-be names (a pre-*Platoon* Charlie Sheen and Maxwell Caulfield during his stint on *Dynasty*), this little flick came out under the radar and still goes fairly unnoticed. Spheeris, a punk film icon for *Suburbia* and her *Decline of Western Civilization* series, throws together a tale of trailer-trash hellraisers that turn from slightly-annoying party crashers to thrill killers in less than one weekend. Attempts to compare the duo to the serial murderers who were in vogue at the time falls by the narrative wayside, but the gonzo antics of the leads do bring to mind more recent hate crimes that pop up in today's news.

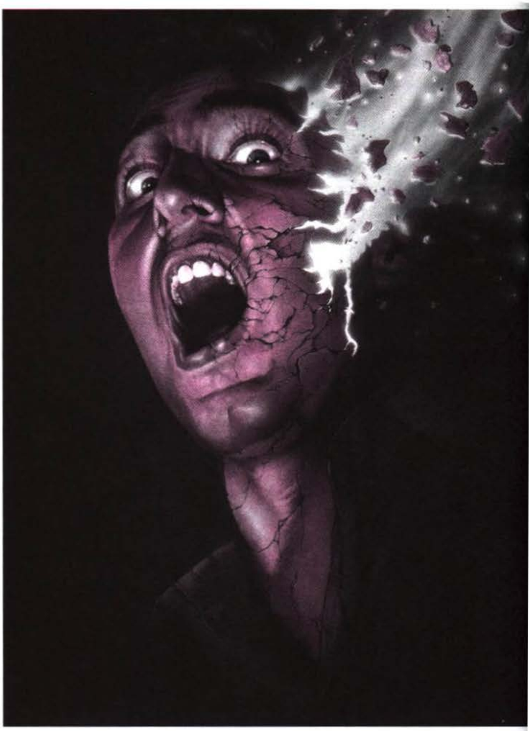

The anger.
The destructiveness.
The urge to kill in cold blood.
THE BOYS NEXT DOOR

Caulfield plays Roy, the dim-bulbed leader of the two. After toying with a local military recruiter and egging him on about killing people, he talks his buddy Bo into having a "Caveman Day" in LA. Caveman Day consists of doing whatever you want to whomever you want; just beat and harass anyone who crosses your path or gives you the stinkeye. Sheen plays Bo, who seems smarter than this plan, but goes along for the ride anyway. Both the leads are great as cold-hearted boneheads and the characters they meet along the way are colorful, though stereotyped, victims: the bitchy old lady, the cruising gay, the drunken whore, the Indian gas-station attendant and so on. Spheeris had a knack of mixing up humor with pitch-black scenarios in her early films and nothing changes here; you'll feel bad about laughing when you shouldn't.

Not as much punk action as you would think, with the exception of the "no rules" ethic. The leads are mainly clean-cut farmboy metalheads, but LA does offer some nice background characters with funny hair and leather jackets. I've been to Los Angeles quite a few times, but have never seen someone walking a tiger down the street! Strange circus-cum-Fuzzbox street performers do their thing as well. The soundtrack has a few great Cramps songs but flatlines with early Great White tunes. The true gold of it all is dialogue the boys throw back and forth while hassling punk chicks on Hollywood Blvd.:

BO: Dude, they're punk rockers. Total anarchists!
ROY: They're what?
BO: They're *anarchists*, man...it mean's they'll fuck anything!

(RF)



BRAIN DAMAGE

Dir. Frank Henenlotter / 1988

An ancient parasite finds a host and feeds him with hallucinogenic visions in exchange for fresh human brains.

Henenlotter makes a splatter-art masterpiece. Sick humor and exciting visuals make this one ideal for repeat party-viewing. The gore and creature effects are mind-blowing (pun intended). The main character Brian goes to a punk club where people with devil locks, mohawks and other crazy hairdos pogo to slow rock music performed by a man who looks like he should be a sax player in Paul Shaffer's *Late Show* band. Here Brian picks up a girl and, in a nearby alley, the parasite (smoothly voiced by horror host icon Zacherley) pops out of his pants and scours her skull until her brains are completely devoured. A man in a Germs T-shirt stands by in a nearby doorway, blissfully unaware. This scene is so completely beyond the realm of bad taste, it'll make you puke and cheer at the same time. And don't worry, there is a little something for the ladies in this film. Of course I'm referring to the hugely muscular naked man in the hotel bathroom.

Now that both Sam Raimi and Peter Jackson are allowed to make hundred million-dollar epics, I think it's Henenlotter's turn. Write to your nearest movie producer and demand that this happen. Watch for the *Basket Case* character cameos on the subway. (BC)

BREAKIN' 2: ELECTRIC BOOGALOO

Dir. Sam Firstenberg / 1984

Blue collar fancy-steppin' saves the day again.

Turbo (Michael "Boogaloo Shrimp" Chambers), Ozone (Adolfo "Shabba-Doo" Quinones) and Special K (Lucinda "Lucinda Dickey" Dickey) return to the big screen just seven months after their initial pop-n-lock opus, this time to rescue an inner city youth center from a diabolical (aka Caucasian) land developer. With the help of newly inducted action-dancers like 8-year-old Lil' Wizard, a mime and fire-haired, bullet-belted spandexpunk Jane, their road to inevitable triumph is both unrealistic and unreasonably entertaining. Their old nemeses the Elektro Rock Crew are back as well, largely to take part in high-impact ghetto blaster face-off's. The Elektro Rockers' villainous fashion sense has bloomed into a family-friendly nuclear biker aesthetic, and this new plateau in visual confrontation does nothing for their maneuverability. In one shot, the laws of reality are obliterated when their souped-up boombox sports a sticker from the original *Breakin'* film. Ice-T also returns from the first installment, now in full post-apocalyptic studded battle gear, though his devil-locked keyboard player trumps all competing chic.

While all the film's unwhite (sorry, Lucinda) dancers show a tremendous amount of talent, it's Turbo who exudes the ultimate powers with an antigravitational floor-to-ceiling rhythm assault on his garage apartment. For this flawlessly executed scene, the filmmakers borrowed the rotating bedroom that had been used for the first grisly murder in *Nightmare on Elm St.* and converted it to suit *Breakin' 2*'s breezy goodtime interior décor. This color palette—consisting largely of pastel greens and neon pinks—is used to maximum effect throughout, most shockingly in the final shots at the youth center where inner city teens perform in an Easter rainbow of eye-gouging hues. Studio-released breakdancing films seemed played by Hollywood as hip-hop culture's fashion mirror to the equally misrepresented new wave movement, and there were obviously no restrictions placed on costume designer Dorothy Baca. It may have been due to her crimes against casualwear here that she didn't work on another film until 1997's *Batman and Robin,* another movie where every character looks really, really stupid. (*ZC*)

BREAKING ALL THE RULES

Dir. James Orr / 1985

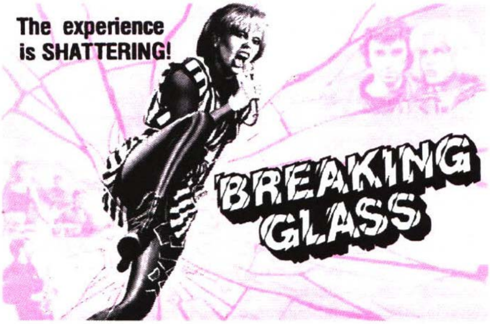
Horny teenagers wiggle their eyebrows at each other next to a carousel for 90 minutes.

Debbie is a pampered socialite who suddenly adopts a severe new wave aesthetic, but only to rebel against her mother's traditional values. In one afternoon, she goes from ballroom gowns to leather straps, spiked white hair and a "SAVAGE" half-shirt, becoming unrecognizable to even her closest friend. Jack is exactly the type of 28-year-old high school virgin who wears a rubber penis on his nose and looks up women's dresses. A chance bus ride changes their lives, their hormones converging en route to an amusement park. The rest of the film is a bland, agonizing display of dead-eyed ass-chasing, with teens pairing off every few minutes to put their hands and/or tongues in some non-entertaining place. Despite its cheerful cover art, *Breaking All the Rules* may rate as the most joyless, insincere youth comedy of the '80s, constantly mistaking erections for romance and suburban discontentment for teen rebellion. (*ZC*)

BREAKING GLASS

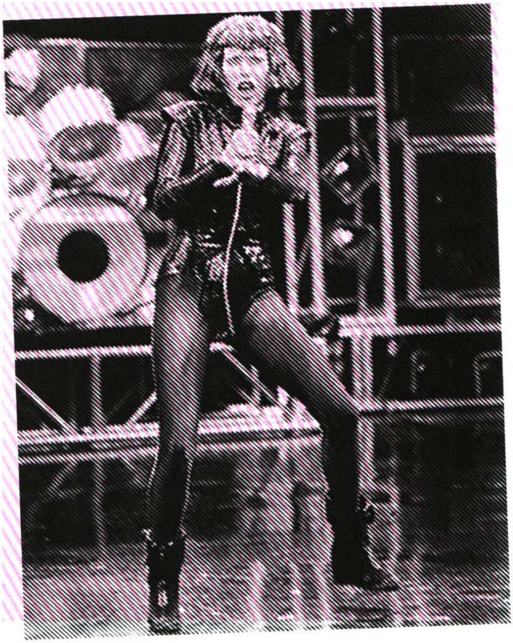
Dir Brian Gibson / 1980

Success ruins music and everything else.



Hazel O'Connor plays Kate, a self-motivated if talent-challenged frontwoman for rock group Breaking Glass who are "*not* punk and *not* new wave," though clearly inspired by both. Would-be rock manager Danny (Phil Daniels) does his best to kickstart her career by placing an ad for band auditions. The musicians that show up include a gospel trio, two gold-painted, neon-mohawked non-humans and a deaf saxophonist (Jonathan Pryce). A working version of the band is formed and plays to marginally enthusiastic pub-punk crowds, pissing off a few neo-Nazi thugs in a pool hall. As reactions grow stronger, the group gains confidence, ability and a knack for confrontation. Struggle is constant; the band is never at peace with police, venue owners, record labels and/or themselves. Kate begins to perform in kabuki-flair outfits, driving the stage show with wide-eyed intensity, even during an electricity-free set played during a blackout.

The fervor catches the attention of major players in the music industry, who naturally do their best to shape the band



into something less powerful. Instead, Breaking Glass uses their increased platform to spread their dissentious message across the UK. At a large outdoor rally, they perform their anti-fascist anthem "I Am the Black Man," inciting a riot among a mob of sieg-heiling brutes. A teenager is killed, but rather than dooming the group, the tragedy only manages to increase their profile. The relentless attention of course takes a toll, inflating egos and destroying bonds until the band's roots are completely lost. By the end, they're unrecognizably stylized and mechanized; any semblance of humanity obscured by a marketable Tron-like fashion schtick.

Though it follows the same idealism-crash-n-burn plotline as several other rock tragedies (both fictional and actual), *Breaking Glass* does so with a great deal of convincing authority. Real-life musician O'Connor did little other film work but pulls off a difficult role in the lead, shifting from determined young artist to hollow money puppet with a consistent desperation. She wrote and performed much of the film's soundtrack and still tours today. Also, the late Gary Holton of the Heavy Metal Kids makes a quick appearance, credited simply as "Punk Guitarist." (*ZC*)

BREAKING LOOSE

Dir. Rod Hay / 1988

A man pisses off some thugs. Then everybody surfs.

The film starts with an embarrassing scene of the main character practically dancing into his clothes. Our hero then hangs out with birds to find inner peace and breaks up with his girlfriend while eating. The villains are biker dudes and one has a mohawk and a leather jacket with a badly-drawn skull on the back. The leader of these baddies cuts wrists with a studded glove and rubs blood on the protagonist's face. The gang also has a drag race and a Viking funeral for a departed member. Now why can't every movie have bad guys as active as this? Worth watching if just to see an Australian do a Curly impression. (*BC*)

BREWSTER'S MILLIONS

Dir. Walter Hill / 1985

Richard Pryor must spend a lot of money in a short amount
of time so he can inherit even more.

The punk appearance in this film is incredibly brief and hard to catch. The VHS will surely cut him out, so you'll require either the DVD or 35mm print because he only exists in the widescreen version. You'll also need to have a DVD player with a zoom function to really make him kind of, sort of visible. Ready? Okay. It's in the scene where Pryor is leaving his hotel room. There's a large crowd. In the far, far right of the screen will be—for only a second—a man with a spiky mohawk standing beside a bleached-haired woman.

Walter Hill fans will wonder why he made this movie. It doesn't feel like one of his at all, but it is great family fun. Rick Moranis is excellent. Yakov Smirnoff plays a cab driver and he actually says, "What a country." Yes! The premise is a great launching pad for gags like Pryor buying a 1.5 million dollar stamp and mailing a postcard with it. John Candy goes a little underused as Pryor's friend, but is still allowed to have his moments. Hill fanatics: look for the Torchie's, a fictional business that appears in many of the director's films. (*BC*)

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

Dir. James Bridges / 1988

A dramatic celebration of the stereotyped excesses
of middle-income New York night life.

Michael J. Fox expends his oeuvre as a cocaine-huffing, divorce-bound writer on the proverbial verge. His best friend (Kiefer Sutherland) routinely drags him out to dance clubs to clutter bathroom stalls with other overdressed Madison Avenue trash. On one such outing, Fox speeds by a sociable fish-out-of-water with a bleached mohawk. Later, the *Back to the Future* star argues with a fetus puppet. (*ZC*)

BROKEN ANGEL

Dir. Richard T. Heffron / 1988

A concerned parent scours the city.

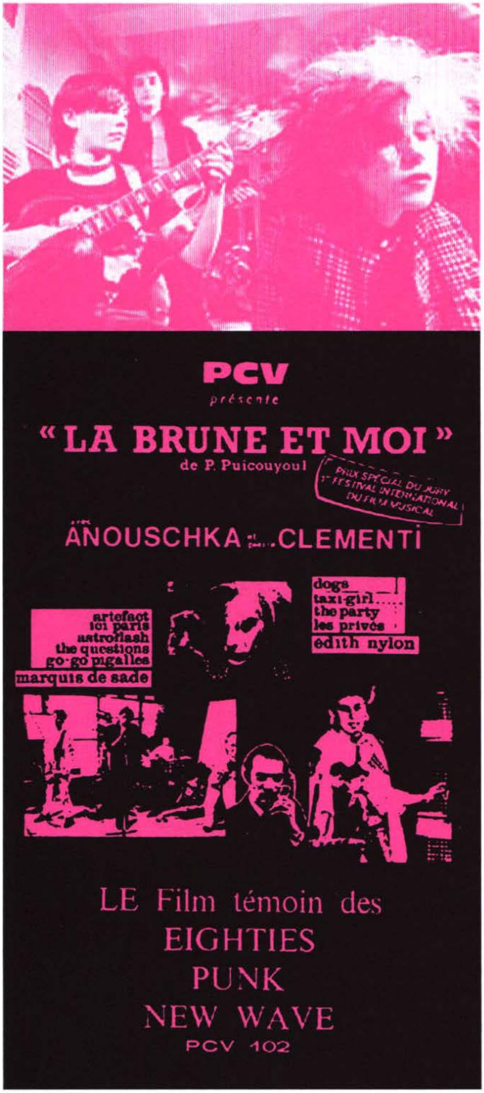
William Shatner seems almost chemically subdued as suburban father Chuck Coburn, whose daughter Jaime (Erika Eleniak) goes missing after a gang war. Picking up the pieces with his recently unfaithful wife and nigh-transvestite son, Chuck delves into the middle-class underworld in search of answers. After investigating Jaime's favorite Laser Tag arena, he braves retail clothing store Earthquake, where a chiseled leather punk with a gargantuan mohawk combs the aisles. Even the store's mannequin rides the wave of punk extremism, perched atop a stationary motorcycle with her bleached buzz cut glaring beneath the fluorescent bulbs. Next stop is the record store where Chuck covers his ears to block out a decidedly un-punk din that sounds like the theme from *Unsolved Mysteries*. In desperation, he walks the streets of Hollywood passing out flyers with Jamie's face, questioning every passing junkie and studded semi-human. These segments showcase the many faces of misspent youth, running the wide range of made-for-TV punk fashion. Skins, goths and lofty liberty spikes clog the LA sidewalks, an inexhaustible wall of aimless rebellion that offers no solace to a heartbroken dad. His journey eventually takes him into the ultimate den of iniquity, a squalid rock club jammed wall-to-wall with countercultural goofballs and scumdogs. If the Hollywood street shots displayed a punk zoo, this scene is Noah's Ark; Shatner is the only non-wasteoid onscreen, walking amid dozens of new wavers, red-leather metalheads, tie-dyed zoned-out boners, nocturnal maniacs and all the other types of rabid losers that comprise parents' nightmares. (*ZC*)

LA BRUNE ET MOI

Dir. Philippe Puicouyoul / 1980

A French scenester is romanced by a creepy sugar daddy who promises to make her a punk rock star.

It's been said that the French can't rock. That may have been true in the early '60s, when French popular music tried desperately to compete with British and American acts a good five years ahead of them, and goofy Scopitones saw performers like Johnny Hallyday, Sylvie Vartan and France Gall topping the charts. But, by the time punk emerged with post-punk right on its heels, France proffered a crop of underground acts that could rival anything coming out of New York, LA or London.



Director Puicouyoul had the foresight to document some of the greatest bands of this period—Ici Paris, Dogs, Taxi-Girl, Go-Go Pigalles, Edith Nylon, Questions, Marquis de Sade, Les Privés, Astroflash and The Party—and place them in a practically nonexistent narrative about an untalented but beautiful punk rock scenester (Anoushka) who takes up with a pathetic, balding businessman (the once-stunning Pierre Clementi from *Belle de jour*) who promises her punk rock fame. When he proves clueless about what punk rock is (in a hilarious scene that sees Anoushka barely tolerating a jam band in full swing at the auditions), she takes her smitten sugar daddy on a journey through the French underground to see what kind of bands she'd be happy fronting.

The film's title is a play on the French title for the 1956 Jayne Mansfield rock 'n' roll movie *The Girl Can't Help It* (*La Blonde Et Moi*), and like its predecessor, *La Brune*'s structure is a showcase for the musical acts who appear in the film, although to a greater extent since any moments of "plot" are fleeting and rather nonsensical. Meanwhile, the groups are all given significant screentime and each performs a full song. For many of the acts in the film, this is the only surviving footage of them on stage.

The film was allegedly shot in one week with equipment Puicouyoul borrowed from a "legit" film he was then employed on. It played for a week in a small theater in France in 1980, never to be heard of again until 2006, when San Francisco DJ Pink Frankenstein (Johnny Lieske) was in Paris researching his documentary *Bardot A Go Go* and stumbled upon a 16mm print at the Cinémathèque Française. Nonetheless, the negative and original master audio tracks have been lost. Lieske and his label, Rockenscope, struck a deal with Puicouyoul to restore the film digitally and have since arranged scattered screenings around the U.S. (*KJ*)

BRUTAL FURY

Dir. Fred P. Watkins / 1993

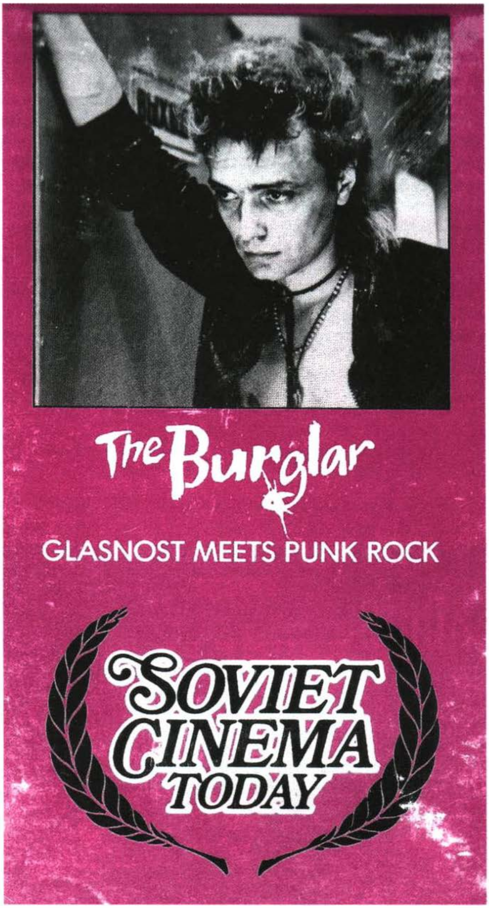
A policewoman goes back to high school as an undercover punk and encounters sleazy drug dealers, a killer rapist, a lesbian gym teacher, female vigilantes and, most importantly, a deadly, redheaded psycho schoolgirl.

Ostensibly, *Brutal Fury* is the story of Molly Griffin (Annette Gebron), a tough cop who has gone undercover in a Texas high school to infiltrate and eventually bust a drug ring. But for the most part, the film follows the increasingly violent behavior of Misty (Lisa-Gabrielle Greene), a troubled teen who suffers from black-and-white flashbacks and spurts of homicidal impulses. I can only speculate on the making of this inept Texas cheapie, but here's what I think happened: director Fred P. Watkins started shooting his "undercover punk" film and soon realized what a cold fish he had in his lead role. While most of the acting in *Brutal Fury* is lethargic, it's really troublesome when your top actress isn't engaging or interesting. At the same time, the performer you hired for the supporting role of Misty at least looks a little crazy and shows some acting range. So what's any resourceful director going to do? Switch the focus of your film; and the result is this schizophrenic, amateurish—but genuinely entertaining—low-budget loaf of film crud.

There's a serious problem at the local high school, as kids in Dio T-shirts are overdosing on crack. In order to shut down the drug supply, police detective Molly Griffin goes punk. She musses and dyes her hair, dons skeleton earrings, sports a motorcycle jacket and attempts to eliminate the source. But drugs are only one of many problems. Also threatening the kids is a lesbian gym coach who's using her job to prey on her female students, and an asshole rapist jock (sorry to be redundant) who casually commits beach towel homicide after a picnic/date-rape goes awry. Afterwards, he constantly seems on the verge of killing some more "sexy bitches." Officer Griffin is not the only person concerned with the situation at the high school. In order to combat the increasingly deviant behavior by their peers, two girls form a vigilante gang called The Furies and roam the streets at night cloaked in unflattering black leotards. The Furies like to jump students as they walk from their cars, punching and chopping their victims while saying stuff like, "That's for smoking pot in the bathroom" and "Don't sell your body for sex!" They even chastise a punk chick for cheating on a math test!

Amidst it all roams Misty, a spooky, flashback-tormented, karate-chopping redhead with anger control issues due to sexual abuse from her stern redneck father. In their pursuit of justice, The Furies recruit her to join their vigilante sisterhood and Misty enthusiastically takes up the cause, becoming the *brutal* Fury. She beats the shit out of two ridiculous cinematic punks (clad in acid-washed jeans and giant industrial-sized chains), stabs the lezbo gym teacher with a bayonet, whacks the psycho jock and sets her sights on the drug ring, resulting in a clumsy climactic showdown between Misty and Molly.

While *Brutal Fury* doesn't really deliver on the sex or sleaze (and Linda Blair is nowhere to be seen), this is the kind of movie Cannon Films used to specialize in. Still, it's no *Savage Streets*. The undercover punk idea is pretty good, but it's essentially a side story to the psycho-chick revenge plot. Regardless, there's plenty here for fans of stoopid low-budget movies to get off on. Personally, I was fully entertained by the ridiculous age of the actors playing high school kids. It's easy to believe that some 30-year-old broad could go undercover as a high school punk when the sophomores resemble dumpy lunch ladies, but it's confusing when the lesbian gym teacher looks younger than Molly's "teenage" drug connection. The laughs continue with the absolutely graceless martial arts choreography that makes Rudy Ray Moore look like Bruce Lee. And really, how can you dislike a movie with a closing theme song (called "Misty") played over a burning car, with lyrics earnestly retelling every single plot point of the film. (*SH*)



THE BURGLAR

Dir. Valeri Ogorodnikov / 1986

A boy commits a crime with the intention of helping his brother, a vocalist in a punk band.

TV footage of a breakdancing punk is shown as a newscaster reports, "Some youth groups have assumed strange, annoying appearances..." A teen with an acoustic guitar plays a song about the young children of Russia being future punks and hooligans. A robotically synchronized new wave breakdance troupe performs to a synth-pop number. A roomful of nocturnal losers studiously view a slideshow depicting the failed assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II. One character states that he "prefers the punk wave to the new wave."

This Russian realist drama initially promises to dive into the country's developing counterculture, but is largely the story of Sonny, a despondent, motherless adolescent who worships his older brother Kostya. The boy searches for his hero through flickering dive bars and new wave arcades, and ends up present for a show by Kostya's band Alisa (an actual group at the forefront of the USSR's music scene at the time). The performance is a huge hit with the seated crowd, who pump their fists and chant along with a song about hating elevators. Though a success on stage, Kostya is perpetually broke, in debt to a mohawked lowlife named Howmuch. He dodges him constantly, appearing in public only to perform. Alisa's fans frown and heckle through a squalling psychedelic band at a later show, and the next warm-up act also fail to impress with their post-modern sax cabaret posturing. Finally, Kostya's back (this time in studded leather), electrifying an enormous crowd with a song about "the sweat of pomaded hulks." He smashes a guitar and throws it to the hungry audience.

As his personal debt reaches its maximum, Howmuch demands that Kostya deliver him a synthesizer to square their finances. The singer's troubles worsen, creating a rift between himself and his family. The discord between Kostya and his widower father is presented so well that the viewer feels voyeuristic during their arguments. As expected in grim dramas like this, things go from bad to worse.

Kostya's friends are consistently hassled for the way they dress, living in packed apartments where they dance and smoke dope endlessly. They have a motorbike rally where an entrant affixes a metal mohawk to his crash helmet. Another scene has three working-class dads mimicking the dance moves of a punk on television. This moment is a rare breath of humor, and though the film is much more stark than Western audiences are accustomed to, *The Burglar* is an affecting and seemingly personal look at the Russian punk movement. (*ZC*)

BURST CITY

Dir. Sogo Ishii / 1982

Apocalypse punks riot against police, nuclear
domination and everything else.

Ishii's infinitely more punk-driven follow-up to his 1980 street war epic *Crazy Thunder Road*. In the lawless world of *Burst City*, Tokyo hovers between a booming, Westernized business age and a youth culture apocalypse. Their fashion is a decidedly glam take on the UK new wave, but is as confrontational as any punk aesthetic on record. The two nameless lead characters are clad in crude aluminum armor and communicate through unintelligible animal screams. Nigh-bionic bikers blaze across the highways en route to warehouse rock shows. The lights flare up and the venue is suddenly thrust into a manic, deafening punk performance by a studs-leather-and-mascara act crooning about the pleasures of heroin. Performances like this—each its own stylized music video—are interspersed throughout the picture, from bands like The Rockers, The Roosters, Inu, The Battle Rockers and 1984 (the last two having been formed specifically for the movie). Between these musical segments, snapshots of Japan's sci-fi-tinted armageddon include rabid street racing, bondage prostitutes and homeless cyborg mutant yakuza. The latter ends up in an escalated battle with the few remaining gangster businessmen for ownership of the war-torn prefecture.

Things dip into the surreal as the situation worsens; facepainted maniacs writhe in the streets while legendary hardcore group The Stalin plows through the throng atop a tank. Sexually-repressed salarymen embark on murder sprees. Severed pig heads are thrown at cops. Ishii's manic creativity (and occasional incoherence) is on full display, and every scene throbs with an electric dedication to punk rage. The final scene is a massive, lethal riot between punks, hobos, yakuza and "Battle Police" that degenerates into a pulsating nightmare. Allegedly, over 6000 extras were used for this revolt, during which an officer is decapitated with an airborne crash cymbal. (*ZC*)

CAFÉ FLESH

Dir. Rinse Dream / 1982

Biologically neutered futuristic voyeurs view live sex acts.

In the post-nuclear annihilation age, 99% of the world's population are "sex negatives," unable to enjoy any skin-on-skin contact with another human. Clubs like Café Flesh flourish, providing new wave cabaret sex shows for a voracious sea of impotent lustbags. The first act features a man in a spandex rat suit seducing a housewife while three adult babies spazz and thrash in oversized high chairs. Next, a pencil-masked businessman defiles his secretary while a zombie typist begs to take a memo. The film mainly focuses on the trials and personal dramas of a few specific sex negatives, including several post-apocalyptic fashion victims as well as the desperately aroused Pia Snow, aka scream queen Michelle Bauer (*Assault of the Party Nerds, Demonwarp, Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*). Writer/director Rinse Dream (actually named Stephen Sayadian) was a goddamn visionary genius. Beginning as writer/producer of the gleefully racist, id-driven headwreck *Nightdreams* in '81, he managed to infuse his lurid porn films with enough damaged art, Cronenberg-worthy mutation and general nightmare imagery to render the boner obsolete for centuries. After a decade of shattering sexuality on film, he disappeared without a trace. (ZC)

CAFÉ FLESH 2

Dir. Antonio Pasolini (as Anthony R. Lovett) / 1997

The same as the first, but worse.

This time around, it isn't subtle new wavers watching the sex acts; instead we get '90s punks with green hair and goths with chains running from their noses to their ears. The "love" scenes aren't so creative either. A mime has a three-way. He's a bad mime too, because he says "ohhh" when he finishes. An upside down woman performs oral sex. An alien in a beret films an act of passion. A man dressed as a bull has wangs for horns. One woman has blue hair and little surfers on her head. Another has red/orange hair and vibrates in an electric chair as a nearby couple does the horizontal mambo. Still, kudos to any porn film made in the '90s that has costumes, sets and a story. (BC)

CAGED HEAT 3000

Dir. Aaron Osborne / 1995

Women-in-prison film upgraded to the science-fiction genre with laser tag arena sets.

Typical late night Cinemax-style exercise with communal shower scenes (even the main characters seem baffled by the unnecessary boob soaping), random S&M (electroshocks to the mammaries) and rape (during the opening credits!). Lots of clumsy karate-kicking, heightened by cartoon sound effects. Ron Jeremy plays a surveillance operator. An actor named Tom Collins is credited as a punk, most likely the mohawked guard. Two inmates have colored hair: one blue, the other yellow with zigzags. Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles is thanked in the end credits. (BC)

CANNES MAN

Dir. Richard Martini / 1996

Two producers make a bet over whether or not an average schmuck could become the toast of the Cannes Film Festival.

Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz. A cavalcade of stars is promised on the cover, including John Malkovich, Dennis Hopper and Johnny Depp. Their appearances mostly consist of the camera zooming in on them from some far-off window or a lame impromptu interview at best. None of the celebrities look amused. In the opening credits' "urban lifestyle" montage, a lady with red spiked hair and a leather jacket strolls down an LA sidewalk beside a girl with a hoodie and a pierced face. This film can't even get self-indulgence right; skip it and instead check out the similarly intrusive homemade films of Illinois public access star David "The Rock" Nelson, who uses the same guerrilla cameo tactics in his homemade horror movies, but to a much stronger effect. (BC)

CAN'T BUY ME LOVE

Dir. Steve Rash / 1987

Superdork high schooler Ronald (Patrick Dempsey) mows enough lawns over the summer to rent his cheerleader neighbor for a month!

Before Dempsey was a red-hot MD on television's *Grey's Anatomy*, he was a red-hot nerd in this surprisingly decent '80s comedy. After managing to talk his beautiful and incredibly popular neighbor into dating him for a month in exchange for $1000, she also fulfills his dreams by making him cool. His rise to popularity is also marked by his "wild" new style of dress and behavior, which includes wearing bolo ties, driving his dad's station wagon and inventing the infamous "African Ant-Eater Dance." Ronald's popularity also means ditching his once loyal nerd friends and eventually shitting on them (literally) in a scene in which Ronald is asked to throw a lunchbag full of dogshit at his best friend's house. It is hilariously heartbreaking.

A cut above the normal shallow teen comedies we all secretly watch, *Can't Buy Me Love* does a solid job of nailing the '80s high school caste system, reminding us how easy it was to separate the upper and lower social levels in our youth. We get our one and only appearance of a punk sitting among the nerds at lunchtime. After being rejected by the popular kids, Ronald returns to his original lunch spot, only to find that they, along with the punk, have also abandoned him. (AT)

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Dir. Albert Pyun / 1990

America's greatest WWII hero returns to save the world.

The year is 1943. Steve Rogers, a polio-afflicted patriot, volunteers to be the subject of a top secret government experiment to create the ultimate soldier. Though compromised by a Nazi spy, the process is a success. The newly-born Captain America is immediately flown to Germany to stop an Axis missile from being shot at the White House, an insidious plan hatched by aptly named, deformed mastermind The Red Skull. Cap botches his mission and ends up tied to the rocket he was sent to stop. He gives it a swift kick during its trajectory, causing it to reroute to the frozen wilds of Alaska, where he and the missile lay frozen for the next 40 years. The Red Skull continues his reign of terror until the Captain is revived and returned to duty. Disoriented by his decades-long nap, he wanders the streets of Los Angeles in search of the world he once knew, achieving maximum future shock only when two spiky leather-clad beachpunks ask him for a cigarette.

The pace is relentless; the plot is retarded. Within minutes, the viewer is treated to presidential kidnapping, motorcycle attacks, extreme bathroom vandalism and the wholesale slaughter of senior citizens. Ned Beatty does his best to lend a bumbling hand throughout, but our hero is too distracted by the film's female lead, who

happens to be the valley-girl daughter of the woman he'd dated in the '40s. Oh, Captain!! Besides the boneheaded script and half-assed performances by normally solid screen kings Darren McGavin and Ronny Cox, *Captain America's* problem is that the title character is barely in it. Instead, we're treated to costumeless doof Steve Rogers, played by walleyed cardboard rectangle Matt Salinger, son of novelist J.D. The part had initially been intended for Arnold Schwarzenegger, and then was passed down to Dolph Lundgren, who was unable to don the star-spangled suit due to the production of 1989's underrated *The Punisher*. But no matter who ended up with the lead, fans of the original Jack Kirhy comic book woulda still pissed flame when they saw The Red Skull sporting a schnozz. (*ZC*)

CAR CEMETERY

aka THE AUTOMOBILE GRAVEYARD

Dir. Fernando Arrabal / 1983

The final days of Christ retold as a French
post-apocalyptic sex drama.

Spanish-born surrealist filmmaker Arrabal unleashed this offender on French television almost 30 years before it'd be seen by Western audiences. In it, the H-bomb has reduced society to its essentials. The police carry on their futile attempts at order while civilians feed their Last Days decadence in junk heap communities. The film's central wrecking yard is home to dozens of meticulously groomed, gaudily outfitted punks and low art outsiders. Colored stripes, airbrushed faces, studs-n-leather and jagged hair are standards, and these residents spend their nights drinking each other's fluids, engaging in sado/maso couplings, and devising new methods to entertain the voyeurs. Their unlikely messiah is Emanou (Alain Bashung, who also composed the film's electronic score), a trashdweller of virgin birth who dreams of bringing his people out of the shadows. Religious themes mount as the story continues, one character confiding in a tiny winged angel she keeps in a glass jar. As Emanou's savior/martyr complex becomes fulfilled prophecy, the movie becomes a less musical, visually new wave version of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which I'm pretty sure is something that no one ever asked for. However, I wholeheartedly praise the scene where Emanou transforms a fat, bearded Satan into a giant sandwich. (*ZC*)

CARNIVAL IN THE NIGHT

Dir. Masashi Yamamoto / 1982

A mostly fictionalized punk-filtered view of
early '80s Tokyo night life.

Disenchanted single mom Kumi wanders the clubs and streets at all hours, lazily searching for things to ignore. She wears sunglasses and deliberately smeared lipstick, firing a borrowed handgun at empty phone booths for kicks. On rare occasion, her Velvet Underground-inspired punk band will play a show for an audience of three junkies, only to have the evening's door money disappear with the promoter. While her friend Ruby has sex for drugs, Kumi rolls around in the park bushes with an understandably hesitant gay male hustler. After she rips him off, he's fatally asphyxiated by an overenthusiastic businessman during some surprisingly explicit intercourse.

And so on. Yamamoto's disjointed catalog of misery strings together as many variations on hopelessness as you could ever imagine, though no characters seem the least bit affected by the emptiness, destruction and death around them. Their only interest is in distracting themselves from their lives by any means necessary. Relentlessly bleak and aggressively aimless, the film presents Japanese punk culture as the final outpost before suicide. (*ZC*)

CARNIVAL MAGIC

Dir. Al Adamson / 1981

A talking chimpanzee saves a failing circus, steals a bra
and teaches everyone the true meaning of friendship.

You will never see another movie like *Carnival Magic*. And until recently, no one saw *Carnival Magic*. It received no theatrical distribution. It saw no release via TV or video. An extensive printed biography on Al Adamson and an hour long A&E special on the director both mentioned nothing about the film. For decades, die-hard Adamson fans doubted that it was ever actually made.

But in 1996, a 35mm print was found buried in the attic storage space of a discount second-run movie theater in Washington state. Despite exposure to the elements and the fact it was wound onto a single enormous, warped, rusty reel, the film was unharmed. Written in Sharpie on the side: "CARNIVAL FUCKING MAGIC." It sat in a corner until one enchanted night, when the projectionists had stayed late and were drunk enough to thread it up. What followed was the most incredible viewing experience of their lives. Word soon got around, and the film became a staple of the theater's beer-fueled after-parties. At impromptu rock shows, Alex the Chimp would be projected against bands playing in the auditorium.

Later that year, the theater was closed and the front doors padlocked, with no notice given to the employees. Naturally, they (all right...*we*) went in through the back and ransacked the place for JujyFruits, bow ties and anything else we could carry. One thoughtful projectionist made a last stop at the booth to pick up *Carnival Magic*, stealing it away to his apartment.

Since then, the print has seen an exciting new life, screening at only the most adventurous theaters. It even ran as part of a festival on the East Coast. In fact, it's possible that more people have seen it in the last few years than in its original release.

Filmed at a dusty county fair in North Carolina, the cast consists largely of the heat-stroked locals staring blankly at the camera. Enter Markov (Don Stewart of ABC soap opera *Guiding Light*), a noble aging magician and the star attraction at the failing carnival. Stormy, the fair's owner, is in dire financial straits and announces that everyone will be out of work at the end of the week. His saddened daughter discusses the situation with Markov. Through this tear-jerking moment, a beacon of hope appears in the form of the magician's hidden roommate: Alex, a talking chimpanzee.

After some convincing, Markov agrees to let Alex go public, and the chimp naturally becomes the carnival's cash cow. He also becomes an enormous pain in the ass: stealing a car, upsetting the lion-tamer and ending up in a poison-induced coma. As he lies in critical condition at the hospital, a distractingly punk ER nurse (played by the mysterious "Galla") assures Markov and friends that the doctors are doing their best. Then she's gone, her platinum hair and spraypainted mascara forever unexplained.

But Galla isn't the only thing we're left wondering about in this so-called kids' picture. The actor who plays Stormy manages to get an actual black eye on a walk between his and Markov's trailer, likely from a bar fight between days on the set. Meanwhile, his teenage daughter gives some pretty questionable "belly scratches" to a groaning Alex, shortly after the little primate steals Regina Carrol's underclothes. And the drunken lion-tamer's sudden and brutal wife-beating scene really works to betray the film's alleged G rating.

This unintentionally twisted family feature is the holy grail for followers of legendary sleazemaster Adamson. The off-Hollywood director of *Satan's Sadists* and *Dracula vs. Frankenstein* was found murdered, buried under the tiles of his indoor jacuzzi by the live-in contractor of his Palm Springs home. As if that wasn't rough enough, the homicide took place just a couple years after his loving wife/career-long leading lady Regina Carrol had succumbed to cancer.

In a way, this true-life tragedy just adds to the legend of *Carnival Magic*. Here's to the State Theater projectionists (punks themselves!), for unearthing one of the great lost movie treasures of all time. (*ZC*)

CATHODE FUCK

Dir. Chris Gore / 1986

Video clip brutality from the UHF wasteland.

An assortment of televised failings collected by the founder of *Film Threat* magazine. McDonalds training videos, God-fearing porn protesters and middle-aged neo-Nazis give way to punk-curious news reporters and angry Christian mothers berating teen punks on *Donahue*. These verbally assaulted youths are defended by a girl credited onscreen as "Robbi: Former Punker." This leads into footage from the infamous *Quincy* episode where star Jack Klugman struggles to reason with blindingly-dressed teens at a punk club. This immortally mishandled moment has gathered such notoriety that TV's most poorly-portrayed cultural outcasts are still called "Quincy Punks" to this very day. Primetime drama stumbles even harder ten minutes later in scenes from the punk episode of *CHiPs*, where mohawked leather band Pain (fronted by a young William Forsythe) square off against radio wavers Snow Pink in a raucous Battle of the Bands. The more vicious group takes the stage with their anthem "I Dig Pain," booting a pogo-crazed showgoer in the teeth at the end of each verse. Of course, the hard-working members of the California Highway Patrol save the day, Erik Estrada punctuating their victory by performing Kool and the Gang's timeless party anthem "Celebration" for an enthusiastic crowd of punk kids.

Even more unlikely—but all too real—is a Public Image Ltd. performance from an installment of Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*. John Lydon clearly can't be bothered with the show's pantomime format or the emptily grinning studio audience, instead prancing grimly through the crowd in a white suit and Hawaiian shirt. Host Clark does his best to play along, but is confused and dismayed by the display. Lydon eventually lets his prop microphone drop to the floor, and moves among the crowd tight-lipped as his pre-recorded voice achoes across the stage. Later, Lydon and PiL guitarist Keith Levene deliberately give a migraine to uptight late-night talk host Tom Snyder. Questioned about his opinion on music, Lydon calls rock 'n' roll "a stale disease." As the tape draws to a close, his confrontational stance is legitimized by some blisteringly embarrassing mid-'80s footage of a tired Clash at their least relevant. (*ZC*)

THE CELLULOID CLOSET

Dirs. Rob Epstein & Jeffrey Friedman / 1995

A compelling history of homosexuals in film, from stereotypes and censorship to tolerance and acceptance.

This award-winning documentary deserves all the praise it has garnered. It's interesting, informative and sheds new light on many classic films. Beginning with the creation of the moving image and Thomas Edison's all-male dance party test films, the filmmakers show the subversive methods used by writers and directors to circumvent societal sensibilities and the restrictions of the Hollywood Production Code. For those in the know, homosexual cues were easy to spot, but most of America was clueless.

Not only does the film address hidden homosexuality and gay characters, it also addresses the rampant use of hate speech. In one particular montage, they show clips of straight characters casually using gay slurs as insults. A scene from *Repo Man* where Otto (Emilio Estevez) says "Fuck you, queer" to Bud (Harry Dean Stanton) is used as an example. The point being that using these words should carry with them the same shame as racial and ethnic slurs. Through clips and interviews they lay out a persuasive argument that, just as films have the power to strengthen acceptance of the gay lifestyle, they also have the power to legitimize intolerance. (*LAF*)

CERTAIN FURY

Dir. Stephen Gyllenhaal / 1985

Unlikely allies are driven into hiding among addicts and maniacs.

Tatum O'Neal and Irene Cara star as Scarlet and Tracy, on the run from both criminals and cops. A brutal courtroom shootout educates the viewer as to what a judge's brains look like, and leaves the girls framed for a staggering number of police deaths. Escaping into the sewers, they're forced to depend on each other, despite Scarlet's racism and illiteracy. The pair attempts to hole up with an amateur porn auteur/drug pusher named Sniffer, who's beaten severely by Tracy after a brazen rape attempt. He later follows them into the urban catacombs, where junkies live in a Hollywoodized hive, groaning and mating in a candlelit, subhuman stupor. Scenes like this provide the film with an impressive level of true seediness, especially when Sniffer stoops to dosing Tracy with a heaping helping of heroin. It's in this segment that the film veers into a marginally punk underworld, as several of the peripheral characters flaunt the compulsory symptoms of off-punk interpretation. Leather jackets with painted skull symbols, floppy jet-black hair and who-cares back alley streetwear lurks in the corners, the cherry on top being O'Neal's McDonaldland orange dye job. Though the punk content is feeble, *Certain Fury's* heartless action is enough to keep any cop-killing misanthrope riveted. (*ZC*)

CHAINED HEAT

Dir. Paul Nicholas / 1983

A young woman finds herself surrounded by
high crime and lowlifes behind bars.

This repugnant geyser of rampaging filth materialized at the narrowing end of the women-in-prison genre and rendered any future entries moot. A masterpiece of hopeless humanity engaged in drug use, fatal combat and desperate, self-loathing sex acts, inexplicably cast with a top-caliber bevy of B-list dignitaries and former A-list stars seemingly fearless in their desire to bring the putrid story to full force.

2000 women stripped
of EVERYTHING they have
-except the will to SURVIVE!

Linda Blair is Carol, the requisite innocent who finds herself in a cartoonishly corrupt pokey as an oblivious leatherpunk with a black buzzcut twitches and sways to her cassette Walkman. Once transferred from the holding cell, each prisoner must face the none-too-romantic advances of everyone from her cellmates (including the incomparable Sybil Danning) to a cocaine-huffing warden, played by the poor man's Richard Burton, aka thundering character actor John Vernon (*Point Blank*). Distinguished clayface Henry Silva and former *Poseidon Adventure* star Stella Stevens are a scheming duo who plan to use the tainted prison system to their own advantages. Other notables include Tamara "*Cleopatra Jones*" Dobson and Monique Gabrielle. All the seasoned performers seem aware of the position they've taken and power violently forward without abandon, leering, murdering and hamming with unrepentant force, clothing be damned. Vernon is especially dedicated to his role, grinning in a drug-borne megalomania from his office jacuzzi surrounded by taxidermied creatures and bordello décor.

Every moment of Nicholas' low-art opus is built to repulse and offend, and does so with a sincerity never seen in exploitation after this era. *Chained Heat* is simply the purest example of its form and still manages to remain reprehensible, even in this golden age of computer-advanced, Internet-assisted immorality. (*ZC*)

CHAINS

Dir. Roger J. Barski / 1989

Four upper-class suburbanites find themselves lost in the 'hood
and at the mercy of vicious street gang The Chains.

On their way to a Chicago jazz club, two very white couples take their luxury sedan on a wrong turn into hostile gangland territory. They accidentally witness the assassination of the scrawny punk kingpin of local heavies The Chains. No sooner does his ventilated blond spiked noggin hit concrete than The Chains are up in arms and looking for any possible suspects. As the yuppies try to peel out to safety, a frenzied youth (played by a frenzied 35-year-old) spazzes his way into their unlocked back door with a resounding "Get me the fuck outta here!" It turns out the new passenger is indeed the hunted gunman, though he was only avenging the murder of his baby brother.

Despite the fact that they're constantly driving beneath overpasses, no one is able to find an onramp, and soon our five default heroes are without a car or weapons. They hole themselves up in a conveniently abandoned warehouse while their hard-rollin' pursuers close in. After some violence is inflicted, one of the fancypants rises to the occasion and goes mega-warrior, joining the avenging gunman in an almost-impressive round of *Straw Dogs*-inspired defense. Shocked by the unlikely retaliation, The Chains call on their secret weapon: The Dead Man, a Terminator-esque thug who's "so tough he killed his own mother."

Chronologically and stylistically centered between *The Warriors* and *Judgment Night*, *Chains* is a couple handfuls better than it should have been. But if you're genuinely interested in multiple homicides, this is still a poor substitute for the real thing. (*ZC*)

THE CHAMBER

Dir. James Foley / 1996

A young attorney tries to win a pardon for
his racist grandfather on death row.

Supposedly, *The Chamber* is John Grisham's least-favorite film adaptation of his best-selling novels. He probably said this before *Christmas with the Kranks*, but, regardless, Foley's movie is underwhelming and overlong, lacking any of the sensationalized racial drama of the same year's *A Time to Kill* or the courtroom thrills of *The Rainmaker*. It also squanders a solid Gene Hackman performance. He plays Sam Cayhill, a crusty old Ku Klux Klan jerk on death row in a Mississippi prison. He got the death penalty 30 years before for blowing up a building with a Jewish lawyer and his two sons inside. Adam Hall (Chris O'Donnell) is Sam's extremely boring grandson, an aspiring legal man seeking to win a reprieve for ol' granddad. Because of the case, Adam gets to know his gruff relative and learns a bunch of dark family secrets from his aunt (Faye Dunaway). Doing further research, Adam visits a white-power rally/amateur boxing match. At the event, he's beaten up by a gang of five racist, half-assed punks. The main guy has an almost-mohawk and wears a sleeveless Anarchy T-shirt. Two of the other "skinheads" wear tie-dyed tank tops. They're a pretty unbelievable gang, but you can understand why they'd want to beat the crap out of O'Donnell. After some hard work, Sam discovers some possible co-conspirators and tries to connect the other participants in time to save our favorite cantankerous racist from the gas chamber. (*SH*)

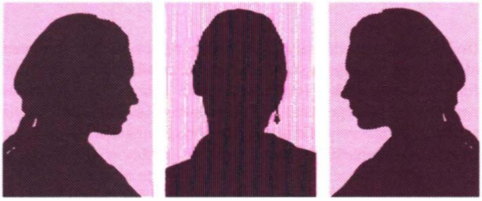
THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL

Dir Joan Darling / 1986

A frustrated family man decides he's had enough
and "goes to war" against the system.

Brian Dennehy is just a regular old pharmacist with a wife and two sexually-active teenage kids. He's the old-fashioned type of guy who feels awkward about selling diaphragms to the girls in his drug store and cheats on his insurance physical in order to save money. But the daily grind is getting him down, and after one too many nasty visits from his creditors and an especially unpleasant vacation to Hawaii, he throws his hat in the ring and takes his family off the grid. But hold on; why exactly is this guy so upset? Well, he's angered and befuddled by automatic doors. The battery in his car dies and it's a real hassle to replace. There are way too many people in the swimming pool. Life is just too much for this man! He can't even get a seat on the flight that he wants. As he leads a crowd of waiting passengers in a chant of "We want a seat!," two fully decked-out punks enthusiastically join in. But once Dennehy busts out his guitar and gets everyone singing "We Shall Overcome" with the words switched to "We Shall Get a Seat," the punks are conspicuously absent.

This man is one of the least rebellious rebels ever to be featured in a movie. All that happens is he gets fed up with having to pay the bills and his idea of going to war with the system is to stop using electricity and steal water from the city main. He doesn't even have the guts to quit his job, but does get fired for showing up to work on a skateboard. He couches his societal resentment in vague references to '60s radicalism, but really he's just nostalgic about being the first white guy on campus to sleep with a black girl. The film has plenty of entertaining



shares with her single mother. She looks up to a schoolmate who's already experimenting with drugs, and the two start frequenting a discotheque called Sound, a hangout for teen sleazoids of all varieties. After finding a dead junkie in the toilet stall (which should have acted as a deterrent, but doesn't), she meets Detlev, a good-looking homeless kid that hangs with a group of teenage runaways who prostitute themselves at Zoo Station to support their dope habits.

With her feelings of alienation compounded by the fact that all her new friends are toying with heroin, she gives in and tries it herself. On her 14th birthday, she dyes her hair pink and uses her birthday money to shoot up for the first time with a kit borrowed from a complete stranger. It's not long before she's completely addicted and turning tricks to buy more heroin. But, as her addiction increases her looks suffer; she transforms from a fresh-faced beauty to a greasy, desperate teenage hag, and the johns aren't as forthcoming as they once were, even with her prized status as obvious jailbait.

The heroin use in this movie is so unglamourous that it only reinforces how completely fucked up Christiane must have already been to want to try it in the first place. And the level of parental neglect is astounding: although her mother tries to be a "cool mom," the fact is that she does very little to monitor what her daughter is doing from day to day. Even when Christiane's mother discovers her habit (after Christiane OD's in their bathroom), she makes some very suspect decisions about how to deal with it.

Eno and Bowie had survived the demise of the glam era and were adopted as new wave by the turn of the '80s. Their collaborations in the '70s make up the soundtrack to this film; it's all previously released material, but essential to the mood of the picture, most notably "Helden/Heroes," which becomes sort of a theme song for Christiane and Detlev's codependent escape fantasies. Bowie appears in the film as himself, the one adult Christiane looks up to. This loose association amounts to the total punk quotient when combined with Christiane's pink locks, other scattered wild 'dos and the fact that the real Christiane F. was a part of the scene. And, there's an amazing puke scene that is one of the most balls-out nuts things I've ever seen in a movie. That depends on whether or not you count "fuck you, establishment, I'm combining naked, underage kids with interminable projectile vomit" as punk rock. I do.

The real Christiane F. relapsed in 1983 after being clean for ten years, and used heroin intermittently until 1996 when she supposedly cleaned up for good due to the birth of her son. She also had a brief recording career in the '80s, and starred in *Decoder* (1982) with Genesis P-Orridge and William S. Burroughs. *(KJ)*

C.H.U.D. II: BUD THE CHUD

Dir. David Irving / 1989

The zany exploits of a man-eating cadaver.

The unexpectedly comedic, straight-to-video sequel to 1984's film about Cannibalistic Humanoid Underground Dwellers. Cannibal corpse Bud is accidentally reanimated by bumbling college students, resulting in a contagious plague of humanophagia that even features a undead, mailman-devouring poodle. Robert Vaughn puts in an Oscar-worthy comic performance as the military man in charge of ending the outbreak, and TV legends Norman "Mr. Roper" Fell and *Lassie's* June Lockhart appear as an elderly couple. In their scene, a cluster of chud-ified young trick-or-treaters invade their home, eat their canary and transform the kindly old pair into meat-crazy ghouls. One of these inhuman adolescents is costumed as a spiky-haired, black-clad miniature punk.

Gerrit Graham (*TerrorVision; Phantom of the Paradise*) is outstanding in the title lead, combining old-fashioned slapstick comedy and '80s drive-in flesh-ripping with a master's ease. The movie's theme track "Bud the Chud" is a true partymaker, and the balance of the soundtrack is largely (and strangely) provided by the inferior second incarnation of LA new wave legends Wall of Voodoo. Stick around through the credits for some bonus decapitation hijinks. *(ZC)*

CIRCUS REDICKULESS

Dir. Phillip Glau / 1997

A pack of talent-challenged non-artists dissolve
their friendships across America.

Chicken John, former guitarist of GG Allin & the Murder Junkies, "organizes" a performing group of roommates and couch surfers. They set out to tour after two feeble practices, but end up canceling their first week of shows when they can't get the van out of John's LA driveway. All the participants are satellites of his cluttered, stale beer-soaked world, a pack of eternally childish, unemployed aging punks starved for excitement and sick of each other before they even leave home. The most talented performer among them is Dammit the Wonder Dog. Neon-haired self-piercing clown Chuckles is one of the few sympathetic subjects in the documentary, openly aware of their impending doom but whimsically unconcerned. Their second show is all the way in Austin, TX, where a pair of goodtimey punk teens are among the dozen or less people in attendance. An actual crowd of punk kids manages to materialize for the Louisiana show, but by that time the end is already in sight. The audiences, venues and vehicles decline until real life seems tolerable in comparison. A drug-addled, facepainted, even more mutinous variation on *Another State of Mind*. *(ZC)*

CITY GIRL

Dir. Martha Coolidge / 1982

An adventurous young female photographer
enters a dangerous world.

Toronto freelancer Anne (Laura Harrington) ditches her fiancé to indulge in the questionable pleasures of the single life. She travels through vile neighborhoods and clubs, some of which feature peripheral, shadowy punk figures. One better-lit nightclub holds a few blasé new wave wallflowers bobbing their heads to X's "Johnny Hit and Run Pauline." As Anne slides deeper into the nightlife, she runs afoul of a pimp after she snaps some innocent shots of him. It turns out he's wrapped up with a sinister secret order, and Anne has seen far too much. In over her head, she struggles to escape as her new life falls in around her.

Though released following her 1983 hit *Valley Girl*, this was writer/director Coolidge's first feature film. She labored on the project for some time, eventually gaining production help from Peter Bogdanovich and Colleen Camp, who appears onscreen here and in much of Coolidge's work. *City Girl* was critically well-received but faced severe distribution problems and would remain a rarity, its only known official release on German PAL VHS. The director says she never even received a copy. *(ZC)*

CITY OF SHADOWS

Dir. David Mitchell / 1987

A hard-working cop faces urban evil in its lowest forms.

Paul (Paul Coufos) is humorless, fearless and charmless, an unshaven force of righteousness desperately searching for his kidnapped son among the endless labyrinths of the criminal underworld. Hidden between the various opium dens and flesh dungeons is a rainbow assortment of death-match warriors, catatonic transsexuals and punks. A liberty-hawked spazz hops up and down on a burning sedan while a screaming man is chain-dragged through the streets. A sloppy hardcore band pumps out the headaches at a gay biker bar. Punks get their rumps whipped and wangs electrocuted at a caged S&M club. A dopey quartet of *Road Warrior*-inspired gutterbums even invade Paul's girlfriend's restaurant, each receiving a vicious beating as a reward for his trespassing. But this cornucopia of sleazoids is just a small corner of an epically dismal world, with the iciest performance courtesy of the film's writer/producer Damian Lee as child prostitution kingpin Garrett. The immeasurably talented John P. Ryan (Class of 1999) appears as a hot-tempered police precinct head named "Sergeant Fireman." (ZC)

CLASS OF 1984

Dir. Mark L. Lester / 1982

The corridors of Lincoln High are ruled by
a governing body of vicious punks.

"We are the future!" A rabid pack of rampaging new wave teens controls our kids, our drugs and our prostitutes, all the while displaying Third Reich behavior and a blazing disdain for authority. Their latest target is freshly relocated band teacher Andrew Norris (Perry King) who - on his first day on the job - raises the gang's ire enough to get "TEECHERS SUCKS" spraypainted on the back of his car, the first chapter in an escalating conflict.

The crew itself is a perfect amalgam of 80s youth stereotypes, led by the cold-blooded Stegman (Timothy Van Patten), a blow-dried alpha male made deplorably punk by his sheer fury alone. His unblinking hatred of adults and fellow students (especially African-Americans) masks considerable intelligence and creativity. In one scene, he storms Norris' music class and begins clanging on the piano keys, only to break into a beautiful toccata before making his exit. It's an incredible moment that surprises even his gang, and the character benefits hugely from Van Patten's performance. Stegman's sycophantic enforcer is Fallon (Neil Clifford), a lean, muscled bruiser of few words. Patsy (Lisa Langlois) is - at first glance - a light-hearted, clowning new waver, gussied up in reflective futuristic ensembles and perpendicular makeup strokes. But her kewpie personality stops on a dime, revealing a base sexual drive and a complete lack of conscience. Barnyard (Keith Knight) is the heavyset behemoth, his shaved head towering above his classmates as he strides through the halls in a hand-drawn swastika tank top. Perfectly completing Stegman's clan is Drugstore (Stefan Arngrim), the frail, chemically-wracked goofball. His character appears the most waylaid by the group's lifestyle, having dug into their product until he can barely function. When the punks kick up a turf battle with a black gang, Drugstore is the only one incapable of handling himself, and instead crumbles into a fetal position and shouts for help.

Though not even old enough to buy cigarettes, the delinquents are already managing an extremely brisk business in illicit wares; operating from the dingy back room of a downtown punk club, addicts and aspiring shitbags line up down the hall. On the other side of the door, Canadian punk legends Teenage Head stir up a boiling crowd of anti-fashionable ragers.

Harried instructor Norris is just one of the characters eventually forced into fight-or-flight mode by Stegman and company. The great Roddy McDowall plays Mr. Corrigan, the emotionally bankrupt science teacher who's made the life-preserving choice to turn a blind eye to his students' behavior. This abruptly changes when the punks massacre his pet rabbits, leading to one of the film's most harrowing moments as the tender older man holds Stegman at gunpoint in front of the entire class. The principal can't be bothered, the rest of the faculty is practically catatonic, and the only allies Norris can find are 15-year-old band kids fed up with the punk-dominated hierarchy. One of these students is played by a younger, rounder Michael Fox (he'd pick up the "J" later), who tosses out snarky comments until he's stabbed during a cafeteria riot.

Midway through the film, the mounting hostility between Stegman and Norris takes center stage. The formerly optimistic teacher gets slashed with a straight razor, watches his car explode and loses one of his star pupils to drugs provided by you-know-who. He confronts Stegman in the graffiti-scrawled bathroom - clenched fist cocked back and trembling - but he just can't bring himself to administer the much-deserved beating. Glorying in Norris' weakness, the boy proceeds to bash his own head against mirrors and porcelain sinks until blood runs down his face, an act that puts the teacher's position at risk. Through it all, Norris' unfailingly supportive wife Diane Norris (Merrie Lynn Ross, who also executive produced the film) stands by her man until she falls victim to the punks' savage home invasion that costs the couple their unborn child. Needless to say, this act pushes the teacher into an unstoppable, vengeful rage, and he makes each of the kids pay for what they've done, saving the most gruesome kids pay for what they've done, saving the

MARK LESTER

Director – CLASS OF 1984; CLASS OF 1999

ML: The film came about when I went back to my high school in the San Fernando Valley—Monroe High School—and it had completely changed from when I'd gone there. From the early '60s kind of high school where a gang that was just kids with a knife would be a major thing, or they smoked cigarettes, or they wore a leather jacket and they had waterfall haircuts and car clubs.

By 1981, when I went back, there were gangs, they weren't wearing shirts. They were roaming around the campus. There was an atmosphere of violence, there were fights and there were security guards on hand. From there I started thinking, "My God…this is like *Blackboard Jungle*," which was a film that was very influential to me, but this was at a whole new level. So I thought of doing a modern day, updated kind of story about a high school that was violent. I took pieces of different newspaper stories about what was going on, so I did a lot of research on the punk movement. And I was getting magazines like *Face*, which was a British punk magazine and they had a lot of good ideas for costuming and how punks look.

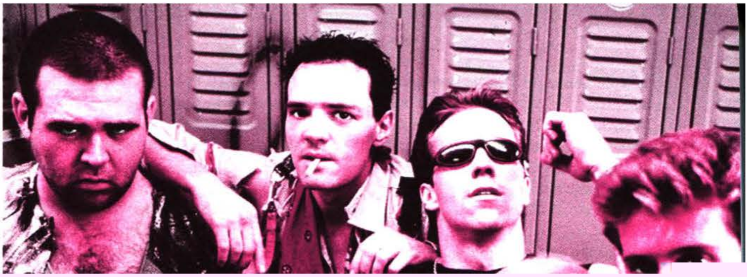
I picked up all these punk elements and I thought that would be good for the leads in the film, to make a punk high school movie and make these bad guys punk rockers, basically. I took all these various influences that were around me and from movies that I'd seen, and then I developed this story that was about how this pacifist teacher comes to this school to teach and comes up against this violent gang of punk rockers. Even the advertising…I mean, *The Class of 1984* was off of George Orwell. I was heavily influenced by punk and in the course of the research I went to New York, and the graffiti from the high school was taken from graffiti that was on all the different walls I saw there. It was very close to what the feeling at the time was.

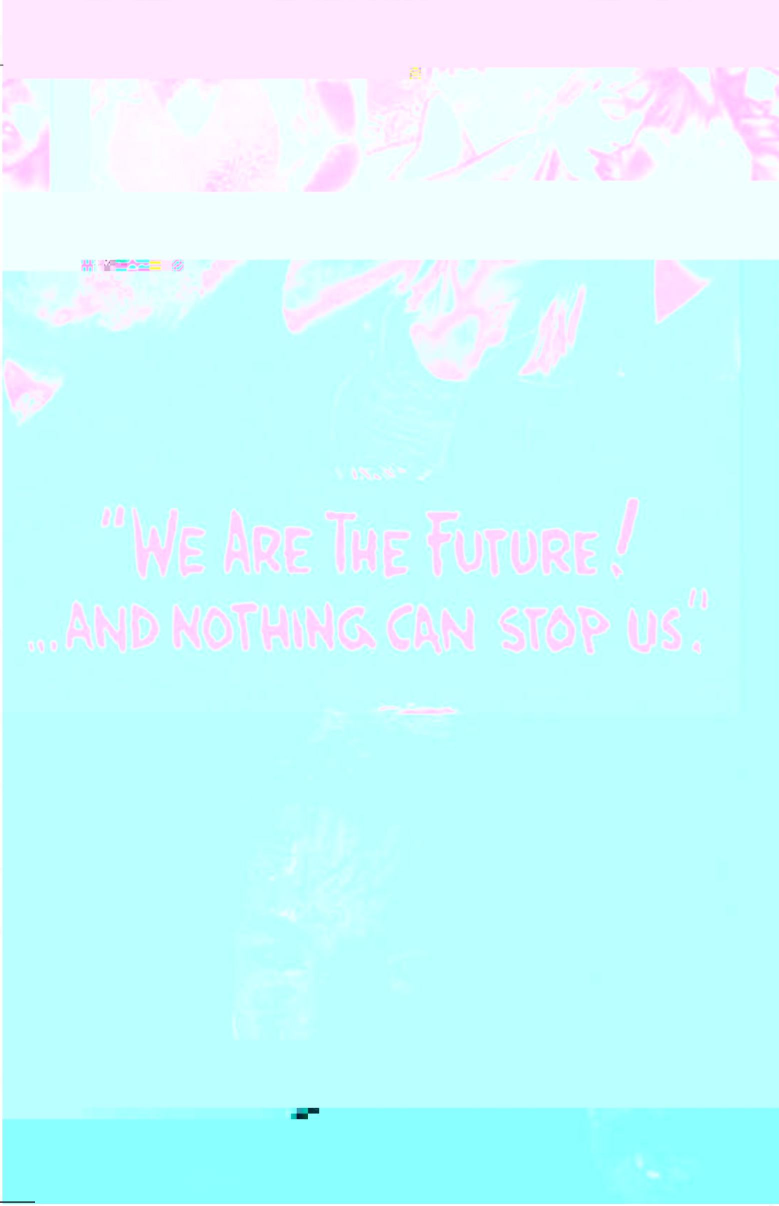
DAM: There were other subcultures running around in the early '80s …did you choose to go with punks because they were the most visually arresting?

Yes. I liked the haircuts and the clothing, and I also liked the slamdancing, so I used that in the club. And then they also were cutting themselves and they gave me the idea to have the guy hit himself in the mirror in the bathroom. I picked up the other things about pain and violence so some of that dialogue was used in the film.

That movie has influenced so many people. I put in a thing at the beginning of the movie that said, "If society doesn't take a look at what's going on with kids' violence, then this is just the beginning of what high schools will be like all across America." It's pretty prophetic; what happened in that movie is actually nothing compared to what actually occurred. And when the movie came out and there were kids going through the metal detector, people thought I was like crazy and that could never happen, someone bringing a gun to school.

You were talking about how you recreated




"WE ARE THE FUTURE!
...AND NOTHING CAN STOP US."

this out in public places. Did you run into problems?

No, this was like the first movie to really shoot in Toronto. There wasn't much production there, and it was all kind of a new thing. It was pretty easy to get permission to do all that.

What was the story with that punk club? I know the band Teenage Head is playing.

That was just a basement that we rented and put a stage up and made a punk club out of it. We just advertised for punk rockers to show up and be in the scene. I interviewed each extra personally. We had three or four hundred people show up and I wanted to make sure they were all right. Every detail of that movie was really meticulously done. When the punks came out, they got pretty violent out there.

There's a scene upstairs in the punk club, it was supposed to be like *High School Caesar*, which is an old movie. It was like a *Godfather* in a high school. The movie has a lot of different stuff going on on all these different levels; it's my favorite of all the 30 movies I've directed.

What was the reaction it got at the time? So many movies that showcased that kind of violence got a negative reaction from adults.

Originally, I couldn't even get it distributed to people in the U.S. because it was so violent to people and the concept was so outrageous. Then I got United Artists and just booked it directly through them, and it opened in New York. There were lines around the block at every theater. Then they played it at United Artists Theaters all across the country right at the same time *Road Warrior* was coming out. It was tremendously well received, but the studios wouldn't touch it. So, it was one of the first independently released films that was really successful, but I had to distribute it myself.

Was there anybody that was really crusading against it because of what they thought was objectionable content?

Yeah, there were parent groups like the PTA. There were protests around the world, and Sweden and certain countries banned it.

But that just got it more attention?

Yeah: but times have changed and things are much more violent. It probably looks pretty tame today.

And that story is true where one of the screenwriters was offended by the movie?

Yeah. This guy Barry Schneider; he'd written a picture called *Roller Boogie* for me. And I had him do some writing on the movie and I was gonna give him a credit, but he wanted to see it first. After he saw it, he left the theater, screaming at me: "How could you do something like this? This is so offensive and I don't want to put my name on this." And then he ran off and I never spoke to him again.

Wow.

I said, "You wrote part of it." He thought it was going to be a failure, but it's become a classic.

From your perspective, what genre of film would you say it falls under?

That's a good question. I mean, it's a thriller, isn't it?

There's more character development for the villainous characters than for almost any other movie I can think of, and I think a lot of that was in the writing and how the actors played it. Did the film come out differently than the way you expected it to?

It came out way better than I ever thought. It was with the audience reaction at the Cannes Film Festival, and Roger Ebert wrote a great review...and then I went, "Oh my God, I really made something."

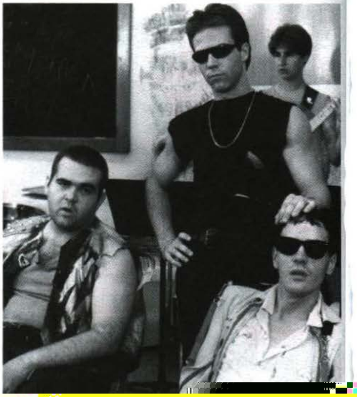
And then you did *Class of 1999*. Was that something you decided to do right after *1984*?

That idea came like four years later, where I was thinking I should update it again, but then it kind of went off into sci-fi. It was completely different, because *RoboCop* had come out and things like that. It was kind of spinning off of what was currently happening in movies.

And that came out obviously with a different distribution model?

Yeah, it wasn't as successful in terms of the distribution because the company Vestron had made *Dirty Dancing*, so they had all this money from that and they funded the whole movie...but by the time I finished the movie, they went bankrupt. So it took a long time because I had to get the rights back to release it theatrically and it got very complicated.

As far as the content, the casting was really crazy, but this time on the adult side.



Working with Malcolm McDowell was the dream of my life; he was my hero from *A Clockwork Orange*. And I watched that film many times before I made *Class of 1984*.

Would you consider *Class of 1999* to be a sequel?

It's like its own movie, really.

And that's how you envisioned it?

Yeah, it's more of a sci-fi movie and the other movie is more of a drama.

I always wondered if you felt there was any connection or if the two movies took place in separate worlds.

It was more that it was easy to get it made because it was presented as a sequel [laughs]. It took place in high school and that's where the connection ends.

STEFAN ARNGRIM

"Drugstore" – *CLASS OF 1984*

DAM: I always thought that of the kids in *Class of 1984*, you are the most convincing punk. Can you give me some context for your personal connection to the late '70s/early '80s punk scene?

SA: I was living in London in 1976 and misspent a good portion of my waning youth on the King's Road at SEX, which was Viv Westwood & Malcolm McLaren's clothing store. I saw the Pistols, Clash, Slits and Siouxsie at Club 100, took too many drugs and got beat up a few times. I then moved to NYC, opened for the Ramones with my band The Wild Boys at CBGBs. Moved to LA, was chums with the Screamers' Tomata DuPlenty, The Motels, Darby Crash, etc. There's more—I'm sure—but I'm a little fuzzy on the details... Oh yeah! I briefly shared a crib with Jim "Iggy Pop" Osterberg and about six girls in LA on San Vicente...lots o' drankin'! Any more and I'll have to rent brain cells to remember.

How did you go from being a bright-eyed kid on *Land of the Giants* to hanging out with the GTOs and other countercultural weirdos?

This is what happens when your parents are '50s beat/actor/musician types. I moved to LA to do *Giants* and such and got situated at Chateau Marmont. Then on to Laurel Canyon, the Warsaw Ghetto of countercultural weirdos...wrong place, right time, I guess.

Can you tell me about the casting process for the punks in *Class of 1984*? And do you know where everyone is now?

Neil Clifford and the late great Keith Knight and I went clubbing and grabbed every cute punk and punkette we could! I also talked Teenage Head into doing the live show in the film, which brought a lot of local fans in. Yes...actually, I have remained in close contact with several of my little punk *compadres*.

How did you get Teenage Head to be in the film? Did you know them already?

I didn't know them when I arrived in Toronto, but knew of them and got to know them fast. I told Mark Lester that if he wanted any "real" punks in his movie, they would have to play! It worked. That club scene is one of my favorites, and I'm afraid one of only a handful of memories from that film. There's really nothing like sitting in a theater at a premiere and watching yourself run around in a blackout. I honestly don't recall doing about two thirds of it...whoops!

That fix in the gang office scene is real. I got an outfit from my Nurse Betty. I couldn't pass the insurance physical, but Mark wanted me bad, so he and producer Arthur Kent hired me a 24-hour nurse on set. I copped some dope from a punk girl extra and decided it would be a nice touch of realism to feed my arm in this scene. It horrified the cast and crew. Mark's only response was to walk on set after printing the take and ask me, "So, Stef...uh, is that really how they do it?"

What was it like working with Roddy McDowall? That scene with the gun in the classroom is classic.

I first met Roddy when I was nine and came out to LA to do a film for MGM. I lived at Chateau Marmont where he had residency and he, being a former child

[redacted]

actor, took me under his wing. *Class of 1984* was the first time we got to work together, and unfortunately the last.

During the rape scene in *Class of 1984*, I notice that you're either not in the shot or you're looking away. Was that deliberate?

Yes! Merrie Lynn Ross and I did not get along famously and I just have this thing about humping people I don't care for. Besides, I was playing Daffy Duck in the rape scene and neither Daffy nor Drugstore can get it up, or care to.

When you first watched the film did you see the punks as accurate representations of real punk kids?

They were...so yep!

I'm not referring to the extras, who were obviously culled from real punk clubs... I guess I meant like Timothy Van Patten, etc. Also, you once mentioned that Vincent Van Patten was originally up for the role, and I cannot imagine Vincent Van Patten looking remotely scary.

Gotcha. OK... well, Mark Lester kinda delegated the punk ambience for the gang—Neil Clifford, Keith Knight and Lisa Langlois—to me, as he clearly saw I was the genuine article—everyone was totally into as much authenticity as possible. So there were many late nights at King Edward in Toronto, blasting the Pistols, Ian Dury, Clash, Slits, Siouxsie & the Banshees, etc. Swimming in liquor and much carousing in local punk clubs for atmosphere [laughs].

Originally, Mark wanted me to play the role of Stegman, but the distributors wanted a "name." They liked Vince for it. Go figure. Even Vince thought that was a stupid notion. He sent Tim instead—technically his uncle—knowing they wouldn't care as long as it was a Van Patten. Vince was right...they didn't give a shit! And Tim, who was not really even interested in being an actor, did the film.

Most punk kids I've known are staunchly anti-Nazi or anti-fascism. What was the consensus when Mark Lester wanted to make the punks in the film racist neo-Nazis?

I fought that, but you win some and you lose some. Mark had a common misread of punks from Sid Vicious and Johnny Rotten wearing swastika armbands and such. Lots of folks outside the UK did. What most people never understood was that in England, dressing up like Nazis is right up there with drag! It doesn't take much coercion to get a houseful of drunk, bored tea-bag boys to trot out their frocks on a Sunday afternoon. Brian Jones, Keith Moon and many other Brit figures have appeared in SS uniforms.

I was against it, but Mark also had some notion of creating a dangerous paramilitary stance in the gang. I suppose the answer lies somewhere in "it's only a movie," which I recall hearing more than once, not just on *The Class of 1984*.

The lead actor Perry King came up with that title on set one day. When we signed on, it was called "Guerrilla High." Yuck! Films that capitalize on or exploit pop culture movements associated with music scenes are notorious for misrepresentations. It's just a question of time. Music and "scenes" move much faster than film. By the time people get their money and folks together, prep, shoot and post a film, that cultural scene is usually cooling, but you can make a recording on Monday and have it out by Wednesday. All big scenes that I've ever been involved with only really lasted at the core level for a matter of months, and then they spread out into the suburban wilderness.

[redacted]

LISA LANGLOIS

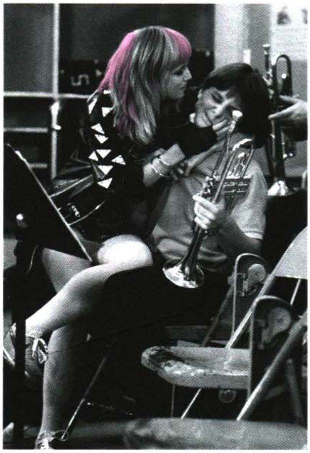
"Patsy" – CLASS OF 1984

LL: Other than the actors themselves, they didn't hire any professionals; it was all real punk people. When we had those big dance scenes in clubs, those people didn't know how to do stunts so they would just do the real thing—slamming people—so the principal actors were getting hurt.

At the time, punks really just wore black or white, and the people on the film had colored my hair pink and purple and yellow. The kids found that really offensive, and didn't think I was a real punk as a result of that. So they kind of let me know that they were gonna get me when I was by myself, and that was terrifying for me. It was a part of acting I'd never had to encounter before. I tried to stay real low during those scenes because I was fearful for my safety.

DAM: How did you get involved?

Originally, they had me come in to read for that student who was being harassed,



never include me, so I was supposed to be a part of this terrorizing gang but could never participate in the action. So, what I created for my character was that I was a kind of voyeur, that's why I threw in the line, "I love to watch." I also made her a real sexual being, and instead of being able to participate, I really got off on seeing people get beat up.

That was kind of a huge thing about your character Patsy. She's part of the whole neo-Nazism of Stegman's gang but so bubbly while she's taking part in it. And also her perversity, which is equally kind of good-natured—

[Laughs.] Good-natured perversity: yep, that was me! That's a great way of putting it. But that was a choice I had to make because I wasn't being included in those acts. I can remember a whole day waiting in my trailer to work and I never got called in while they were staging this fight scene between gangs outside.

So you had to find a different way to make your character vicious?

Yeah, there was really nothing like that in the script for the character: she was just there. So I made her perverse.

But you'd always played "nice girl" characters before that?

I was the girl that you brought home to mom and dad. Only the people who know me or have worked with me before—other than Mark Lester—will cast me in something that is evil because they know that I have that capacity. They know that I may look sweet, but I actually have the capacity to be something else. I think it's because I grew up with four brothers and being around guys, that's how I saw the role: what would appeal to, titillate and be kind of perverse to guys.

So, it was liberating to play that character.

Yeah, it was.

In some ways she seems like the most villainous member of the gang because she shows the least hesitation whenever they're doing something terrible. She gets the most excitement out of the horrible things that are going on throughout the movie.

And that's why I decided to do what I did because I didn't have a hand in doing anything. What was great about Mark is that he actually let me do all that stuff, because he and his wife wrote that script, and here I was asking to do something else. There was a scene where I had to go up and intimidate that girl in the alley and I was like, "What am I supposed to do, Mark? Just go up and look at her? Can I take something like a bottle and break it and put it up to her?" And he agreed. The problem was that they didn't have breakaway bottles and they had to order from Hollywood. And we only had one to work with, so it had to be done properly the first time.

So many of the lines in that movie are incredible and just seem to come out of nowhere.

That's where Stefan Arngrim was good. Also, Timothy Van Patten was really the grounding force on that whole film because there was a lot of craziness going on. It felt really uncontrolled because we were using a lot of unprofessional people and everybody had their own idea of what they wanted to do. And there felt like there was a lot of competitiveness, especially between the boys, but Timothy wasn't like that. He was very secure in himself.

At the time they were doing *Grease 2*, and Timothy wanted to sing for the lead. I remember thinking I wouldn't want to do *Grease 2*; I'd rather be doing this. And Michelle Pfeiffer did *Grease 2* and it's a career maker, and now I'm in a cult film.

Timothy was always very bright. What I liked about him was that he didn't need the industry. He would take the money from each job and then just go off and travel.

Were you at all interested in the punk lifestyle before or was it just part of the costuming and character?

I never liked that costume at the end: that vinyl space outfit.

Space outfit?

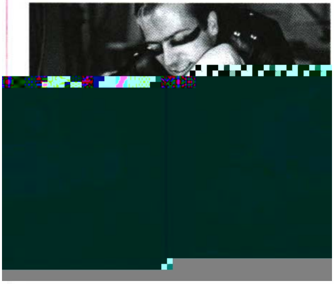
It had sort of a wing out the side. We understood the culture, but we had wardrobe and makeup people who weren't young and hip and weren't part of that. I questioned whether my character would've worn that kind of makeup and glitter.

When the movie was done, were you present for any of the local early screenings? What was the public reaction? And, if you were aware of it, the punk reaction?

I wasn't there, but my mother said that was the moment she knew I was a really good actress because when I got killed, the audience cheered.

Were there any harrowing moments?

Joe Kelley, who played the strung-out kid who climbed the pole, wasn't a stunt man and he did that by himself and I was concerned that he was going to hurt himself. Neil Clifford's wife was having a baby and they couldn't let him leave. It just wasn't in the shooting schedule. But nothing ever really went wrong on that film, except that we were never paid for the television release.

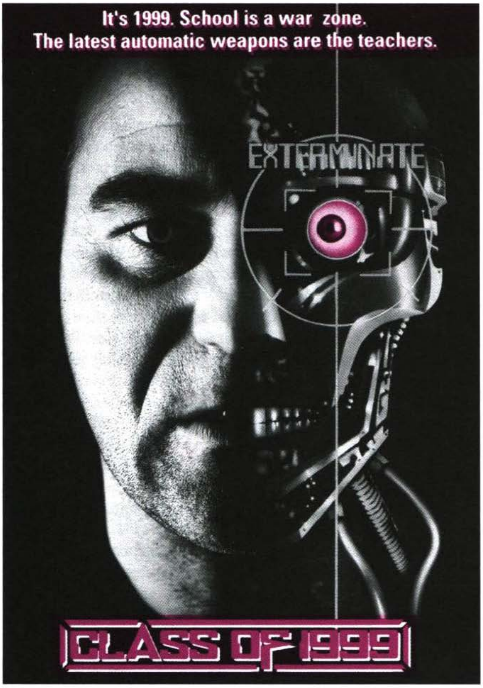


CLASS OF 1999

Dir. Mark L. Lester / 1990

It's punk students vs. robotic teachers in
a futuristic teenicidal meltdown!

Stacy Keach sports a wicked spiked hairdo (complete with rat-tail) as the evil albino Dr. Robert Forrest, who introduces three army surplus battledroids to teach at out-of-control Kennedy High School in an attempt to restore order among the wild youth. Shot mostly at Lincoln High in Seattle with lots of futuristic *Road Warrior* type vehicles, many of these "edge"-snorting punk students (including Joshua Miller, often known as "the weird-looking kid from *River's Edge*") seem to have just walked off the set of "Beat It." Director Lester (the original *Class of 1984*) uses a *RoboCop* template to keep things clipping along nicely with lots of gunfire, explosions and, most importantly, fun robot effects. Patrick Kilpatrick, spank-happy John Ryan (from Larry Cohen's *It's Alive*) and Pam Grier (complete with nuclear robo-breasts!) are the cyborgs, with Malcolm McDowell appearing as the principal. The film is by no means as brutal or socially relevant as its quasi-predecessor, but stands strong as one of the best '80s movies of the '90s. (*KK/ZC*)


It's 1999. School is a war zone.
The latest automatic weapons are the teachers.
EXTERMINATE
CLASS OF 1999

CLASS OF 1999 II: THE SUBSTITUTE

Dir. Spiro Razatos / 1994

An inhumanly strict teacher takes a position at
an unsalvageable high school, making some very
severe changes within the student body.

A roving gang of eyeliner punks in blue jumpsuits (with targets on the buttocks) run into renegade teacher John Bolen, who may or may not be a product of the villainous corporation that produced the robodroids from the previous film in the series. This military-grade maniac goes from school to school, posing as a sub to eradicate any "negative element." Mohawks and spiked pompadours are apparently still the height of future fashion, but now all students are required to don the aforementioned color-coordinated prison uniforms. Still, individuality shines through as longhaired youth menace Ice wears white chaps and a colander on his shoulder. Bolen has little patience for Ice and his pals, and alternates between assigning homework and commiting homicides, one of which involves a student who's just finished performing a raging, drug-induced rooftop guitar solo. Meanwhile, an ineffective robohunter hangs out in his sedan and provides several unnecessary flashbacks to the last movie. After several kids have disappeared, the faculty decides it'd be a good idea to take the troubled criminal students on a paintball excursion with high-powered weaponry. Huh. But this is just one of many charmingly brain-damaged points of the film, my personal favorite being when the sheriff's first name inexplicably changes from "Tom" to "Joe." After this feature, Razatos went on to direct... nothing. (*ZC*)

CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH

Dirs. Richard W. Haines, Michael Herz
& Lloyd Kaufman / 1986

Chemically-altered teens hold
a high school in their leather grip.

Before Troma Entertainment was a guarantor of bouncing breasts and diarrhea antics, they managed to produce a few genuinely entertaining lowbrow epics. Even rabid enemies of the Troma brand (myself included) will admit that *Surf Nazis Must Die* and the first *Toxic Avenger* are miles beyond the company's later watered-down horseshit. And *Class of Nuke 'Em High* plants its flag atop their steaming heap, miraculously serving up a brutally hilarious, hyper-driven, nuclear-powered tempest of annihilation. Like an apocalyptic *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, this is an explosive account of teenage rebellion, only with more radioactive bikers, vomited fetuses, drug-induced subhuman metamorphoses and the second-most essential arm-shoved-down-a-throat moment ever captured on film.

Due to exposure to leaking toxic waste from the nearby power plant, the members of Tromaville High's Honors Society have been transformed into futuristic spazzoids. Their appearances constitute the most intensely cockeyed version of punk imaginable, with standards like bleached hair and studded gauntlets accented by two-pound nose rings, Hitler moutaches and even a rubber chicken hat. The most prominantly displayed of these junior villains is smeared in gray facepaint, with his hair shaved into a spiral and an enormous dinosaur bone clutched in his fist. The gang's leader Spike (Robert Prichard) is a muscular, bloodthirsty sadist with sharp angles painted on his cheekbones. One kiss from him converts the school's foreign language instructor into a bikini-clad thrasher. His followers range from rabid greasers to murderous half-assed transvestites, each taking great delight in the intimidation, torture and eradication of their fellow students. When not engaging in these activities, they're harvesting wild marijuana from the perimeter of the nuclear power plant. One puff of their "Atomic High" causes the more experimental of the student body to mutate into frothing man-beasts and worse. One young lady follows her weed-spawned night of debauchery by vomiting up a squealing monster embryo in the school toilet. This same wee beast eventually grows into a massive, man-eating annihilation machine that's destroyed along with the entire campus. School's out.

Rogue writer/director Haines concocts an ambitious stew where mutant new wavers constitute the meatiest chunks. Though he shared creative credits with Troma founders Kaufman and Herz, the film feels more akin to his excellent *Alien Space Avenger* and is unique among Troma's catalog. One rumor holds that the script was originally written as simply "*Nuke 'Em High*," but the Troma kingpins added the first two words in the hopes that potential viewers would mistake it for punk masterpiece *Class of 1984*. Luckily, *Class of Nuke 'Em High* can be enjoyed on its own terms, but avoid the sequels at all costs. (*ZC*)

☢ WARNING: ☢
EXCESSIVE LEVELS OF
TERROR, SPECIAL EFFECTS
AND WEIRD COMEDY.

CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH PART II: SUBHUMANOID MELTDOWN

Dir. Eric Louzil / 1991

More youth radiation antics.

A quick recap of the first film includes shots of its incredible punk miscreants and reminds us that Troma was capable of producing entertaining product once. Once. By the time this entry's opening credits have ended, the viewer has already been irreparably damaged by countless dud gags, breast implants and dud breast implants. Minutes in, a 50-foot-tall mutant squirrel attacks the Tromaville Institute of Technology, sending cars and bodies to their destruction. This is followed with a viciously underbaked story about manufactured mutants, most of whom are played by busty, self-loathing 19-year-olds desperate for their break in the movie industry and clearly cast for the film by a bottle-fed virgin. A fair percentage of the school's non-naked students are tragically standard Troma punks: cartoonish, attention-starved $10 extras with chicken bones dangling from their earholes. A few appear to exhibit genuine hardcore gutter sincerity, but the majority of them look like they were just kicked off a Fishbone video shoot; their gaudy spiked hideousness a greater crime than the many beatings and baby menacings their characters administer. But the real cinematic felon here is Troma president Lloyd Kaufman, the unparalleled retardation peddler, the lowerer of exploitation expectations, the mammoth anus grunting out increasingly worthless product for a sofa-bound army of future-free shit-eaters. (*ZC*)

CLASS OF NUKE 'EM HIGH PART 3: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SUBHUMANOID

Dir. Eric Louzil / 1994

Don't.

Following the school's destruction in the previous film, scientific madwoman Professor Holt continues her experiements. Joined by the heartless Dr. Slag, Ph.D., she steals one of two human/subhumanoid, half-breed babies and raises it in a world of hatred and violence. Later, the grown child is pitted against his purehearted twin brother. The spandex-clad party punks of the last installment return, along with the occasional crustier variation like the filthy, spiked, blue-maned soldier of the villainous Nukamama Corporate Gang. The final entry in a series made by people who obviously hate movies for an audience that obviously hates itself. This fun-free toilet ride was so putrid that my VCR actually broke rather than finish playing it. (*ZC*)

CLOWN WHITE

Dir. Paul Shapiro / 1980

Deaf child Jason becomes increasingly obsessed
with a mime over the course of a school field trip.

Saul Rubinek plays a teacher to deaf youngsters. He's concerned about the well-being of Jason, who draws people with Xs for eyes. Things get crazy when Jason runs away from a group trip to the city to find a mime who has fascinated him. It's funny, you see, because Jason can't hear and the mime can't talk. The mime shops at a co-op and gets yelled at for not bringing her own bag. The hearing-impaired kids chill at a police station while the adults look for Jason. They entertain themselves by blowing loud whistles and wearing Groucho glasses. On Jason's quest to find the mime, he runs into a new waver (Michael Wincott) with a skinny tie and crazy sunglasses. Jason is scared and goes into a fighting stance, but warms up to him. In the credits, this character is listed as "Street Punk." The real winner of this Canadian film is intense actor Michael Ironside. Here he really looks like a psychopathic child murderer, but plays a singing bus driver. (*BC*)

CLUB EXTINCTION

aka DR. M

Dir. Claude Chabrol / 1990

A psychotic hypnotist dooms Europe's youth.

An uneven, unwanted sci-fi departure from dry art specialist Chabrol. A "suicide virus" is sweeping across Berlin, many of the unaccountable self-snuffings also taking out innocent bystanders. The evil corporation that may be responsible is tied in with shady after-hours bar Club Extinction, a futuristic warehouse where college students flaunt their expensive black wardrobes. The music pumped out over the dance floor is from underrated German metal band Mekong Delta. The nefarious Dr. M looks out over the crowd and muses, "When we were young, we would flirt with girls...now girls flirt with oblivion." Despite the club's congregation of roguish chumps, the film's only punks wander by in train stations, their dismal expressions a counter to their vibrant dye jobs.

The film is a modernized tribute to the original *Dr. Mabuse* series, which ran from the '20s through the '60s and is often best remembered for installments helmed by *Metropolis* director Fritz Lang. (*ZC*)

CLUB LIFE

Dir. Norman T. Vane / 1986

A young man heeds the seductive call
of alcoholic failure.

Cal is a fresh-faced high school graduate who nabs a security job at one of the wildest nightclubs in Hollywood. On his first night as a parking attendant, he brings a rowdy greaseball punk customer to his knees. The offender is a bit clean-cut for the role, a slicked-back, ass-pinching sleazer with barely enough studs on his leather collar to trumpet his attempted lifestyle. Cal's heroics earn him a coveted position as indoor bouncer, where a colleague tells him, "You're the sheriff now... the law and order in a world of punk and funk!" Cal proves himself night after night, on the job *and* the dance floor, but good times come crashing down with the arrival of his small-town girlfriend Sissy. She immediately falls into the glorious world of hooking and heroin, though still finds time to have sex with Cal on a goldfish-filled waterbed. Eventually, personal issues strain things with his employer (Tony Curtis, probably making a voodoo doll of his agent between shots) and Cal needs to put down his glow-in-the-dark nunchucks and break away... *(ZC)*

CLUBLAND

Dir. Mary Lambert / 1999

A young musician heeds the seductive call
of alcoholic failure.

There was a time when all popular music was rap-rock, fifth-wave ska, vaguely religious power rock or folk-jazz fusion. And there was a club called Billboard Live that catered exclusively to fans of those genres. Kennedy (Jimmy Tuckett in his first and only film) dreams of getting his band onto that venerable corporate stage, but just can't catch a break. Until, that is, his albino drummer sells bad meth to a popular artist who is performing there. At first she just seems out of it, and the fans ignore her stumbles, continuing to swarm in a furious circle pit led by a mohawked stomp monster. But, before her first song is over, she falls off the stage and the show abruptly ends.

Faced with a hostile crowd, the manager asks Kennedy if he and his band can fill in. They happily oblige and hit the crowd over the head with a pillowy romance jam. At first there are boos, but slowly the angry masses are numbed by the potent easy-listening tranquilizer coming from the speakers. In time, even the punk gets back in touch with his whiteness and nods along sedately. This semi-success puts the band on the road to moral destruction, where they ride out the rest of the lackluster story. The script was written by the guy who produced and co-wrote Alanis Morrisette's mega-platinum *Jagged Little Pill* album, which is the only logical reason to explain why it was made, and definitely explains why it's crap. *(LAF)*

COMIC BOOK CONFIDENTIAL

Dir. Ron Mann / 1988

A well constructed overview of comic history
from its early '30s origins through the late '80s.

Jack Kirby, Harvey Kurtzman, Will Eisner and dozens more of the field's most respected and innovative creators are interviewed, establishing a chronological evolution from funny animals to high-art expression. The post-hippie second wave of the underground is discussed, wherein Bill Griffith's Zippy the Pinhead character encounters a New York punk in a laundromat. *Love and Rockets* co-creator Jaime Hernandez reads from one of his stories featuring realistic punk locas Maggie and Hopey. Mann's documentary gives a fair, unbiased view of the various apects of the form and is recommended to both comics goons and sequential art skepticizers. *(ZC)*

THE COMMITMENTS

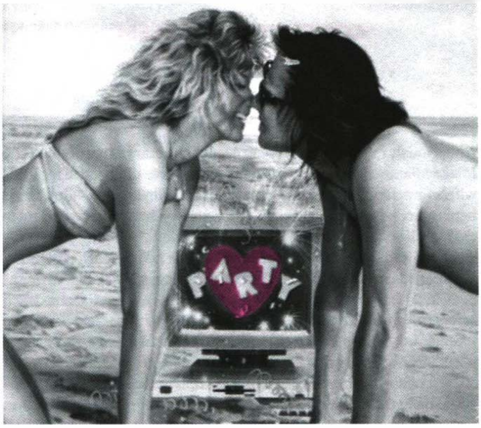
Dir. Alan Parker / 1991

A group of friends decide to transcend
the tedium of their lives and energize the
stale local music scene in North Dublin
by forming a soul band.

The members of the band are supposedly a combination of actors trained for the film and actual, recognized musicians, but I didn't recognize any of them. The oldest member, who happens to be the most musically proficient of the bunch, also seems to be the most sexually proficient, eventually sleeping with all the female backup singers and pissing off the other fellas.

Band founder and main character Jimmy Rabbitte (Robert Arkins) conducts auditions at his parents' home. In these scenes, we're afforded a mini Whitman's Sampler of male punks: a tall red-haired mohawked youth, a skinhead with earrings, a fellow with spiked hair (and a spiked leather jacket to match) and someone who resembles Boy George. The red mohawk kid shows up again later in the movie, at the band's first show in a church.

This movie is so tedious and repetitive, I had to poke myself with a knife to stay awake. *(BT)*



COMPUTER BEACH PARTY

Dir. Gary Troy / 1988

I bet you've got this one figured out.

A shining monument to unnecessary ideas, Gary Troy's aimless, unlovable masterpiece has somehow evaded ironic worship despite its inclusion of every employable brand of '80s kitsch. Two nerdish bodybuilders on high-speed windjammers are run off the beach by Turk, the local millionaire bully. Face down in the sand, Dennis and Andy find a gold coin from "totally awesome treasure ship" The Volaria, believed to have sunk on that very same section of coastline in the 1700s. See, the corrupt mayor has bought the beach and hired Turk to guard its golden secret.

Andy falls for Allison, the mayor's daughter and Turk's main squeeze. The blooming lovers discuss their recent high school graduation, a questionable achievement considering both of them are clearly in their late thirties. Andy's primordial Commodore computer has a horoscope program that tells him to throw a party. Dennis is enthralled by the advanced machine: "It's like looking at a book...on TV!!" A ton of Caucasian schmucks show up to the shindig and exhibit some heinous ass-shaking to the less-than-rocking sounds of The Panthers, a leisurely glam quartet with a pompadoured new wave male dancer in a pink tank top. The band really rips through their intended hit "Beach Party"...especially considering their guitars aren't even plugged in. After Andy and Allison's first kiss, he punches a few buttons on the computer keyboard and a digital heart beats on the screen as the couple heads for third base.

Later, Dennis and Andy throw a second, hornier party. The Panthers return (without their dancer...booo!!) and the frontman takes the opportunity to establish himself as the hammiest, least talented lip-synching gonad in the beach party record books. Dennis gets wrapped up in all the excitement: "Hey, babe! Check out my throbbing pants!" The local deputy is too busy busting humpy teens to pay attention. But each time he makes his coitus-thwarting move, a 20-foot-tall chicken car speeds by to interrupt the sexy arrest. At the movie's climax, a horny new wave girl with a pink-tipped poodle 'do and silver spraypainted boobs chases the deputy across the sand. If you collect footage of muscular tech nerds going cross-eyed while screwing in fast motion, *Computer Beach Party* is a crucial addition to your film library. (*ZC*)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Dir. Gary Davis / 1993

A cop returns to active duty and investigates
a car-smuggling operation while reestablishing
a relationship with his estranged son.

A hilariously miscast Christopher McDonald stars as hardboiled cop Mickey Flannery. He was given a lengthy leave of absence after his wife's murder but, after seven years of monkeying around with his ham radio, he's back on the job. Mickey has a hunch about an auto-thievery scam, but his superiors just don't give a hoot. Flannery is also reunited with his estranged son Jason, and moves in with Flannery and his nurse girlfriend Vera (Dey Young, aka nerdy Kate Rambeau in *Rock 'n' Roll High School*). At one point, young charmer Jason refers to Vera as "the pulse-taker with hooters." The teen has a love interest in the form of a punkish metal chick in silver short shorts, played by Alyssa Milano.

Soon, both father and son's paths cross with a flamboyant character named Gideon (Judd Nelson), who wears eyeliner, sports massive muttonchops and is clad in spectacular outfits, including a puffy red pirate blouse. Even when he's wearing a blue work jumpsuit, Gideon has a flashy chain belt around his waist. Nelson has never been funnier, and I wonder what was on his mind while he was shooting here. Gideon is the mastermind of the car-smuggling ring and also runs a wildly successful metal/bondage bar populated by all sorts of punk-esque goth rockers. Watch for lots of sporty '90s mohawks, mesh shirts, bleach-blond metal chicks, giant flame pits and heshers in leather pants. Generic industrial dance rock booms through the P.A. and the décor is accented by a dangling motorcycle "ridden" by a dancer in a pointy-nippled steel halter top. Anyway, Gideon frames Jason for some murders at the club and Mickey discovers extensive police corruption but, dagnabbit, you just can't keep those Flannery boys down.

McDonald tries hard to be a tough guy, but he's just one of those actors who's much better portraying slimy douchebag types like in *Happy Gilmore* and *Thelma and Louise*. As far as unintentional comedies, go there's a lot to like about *Conflict of Interest*, but as a cop movie this one is a real stinkburger. (*SH*)

CONCERT FOR KAMPUCHEA

Dir. Keith McMillan / 1980

Popular musicians perform in an effort
to end Pol Pot's reign of terror.

Punk rock and dad rock collide in the name of world peace. In this earnest-if-uneven concert film, rising new music groups like The Clash and Ian Dury & The Blockheads join forces with the inarguably mustier Wings and The Who to provide a beacon of hope for the oppressed. Unfortunately, the film wouldn't find proper international distribution until 1988, allowing Mr. Pot another near-decade of murder and tyranny in Vietnam. The Clash run through their "Armagideon Time" and Dury does "Hit Me with Your Rhythm Stick," yet the evil dictatorship carried on unchecked, proving that radio rock artists who take on important social causes are as effective as a faded NO WAR sticker on an '84 Mazda. (*ZC*)

COOL WORLD

Dir. Ralph Bakshi / 1992

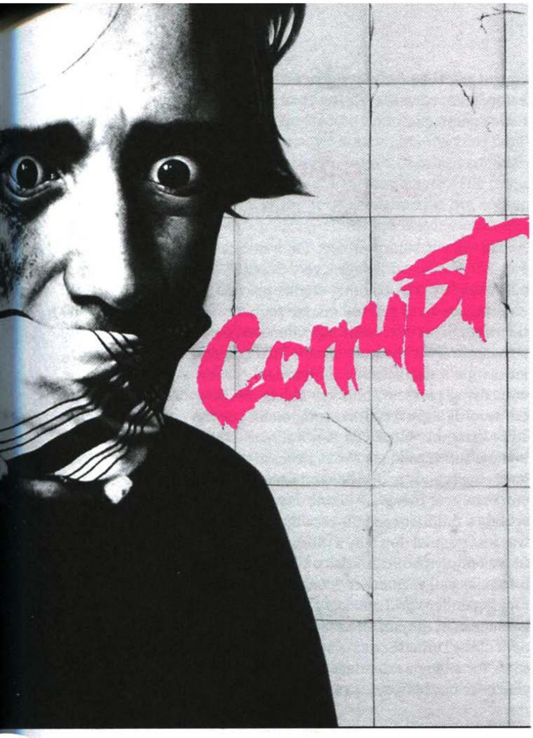
An alternate cartoon Earth threatens
to collide with our reality.

When research for this book began, it was clear that we were going to have to trudge through some severe cinematic sewage to create the most complete listings possible. We anticipated endless shot-on-video action flops, countless brain-dead '80s beach comedies and stacks of the dullest, driest, most pretentious N.Y. art-school bunk. Home-video warriors that we are, I steeled myself for an avalanche of the absolute basest, lousiest, most intolerable dreck ever spooled through a VCR.

I was not prepared for *Cool World*.

The year is 1944. Frank Harris (how could you, Brad Pitt?) has a motorcycle accident that jettisons him into an animated parallel universe. Five decades later, misguided cartoonist/ex-con Jack Deebs (damn you, Gabriel Byrne) gets pulled through a similar portal into a nightclub where matte-painted new wavers ogle pen-and-ink bombshell Holli Would (oh, Kim Basinger...will you ever win?). Things get even harder to swallow when Byrne enters a comic book shop run by a beautiful, glamorous female comic book enthusiast. He also shaved his chest for the scene where some fairly graphic man/cartoon intercourse threatens to open a transdimensional rift. Frank Sinatra Jr. shows up to push forward the aimless barrage of incomprehensible gobbledygook.

From head to toe, Bakshi's better-never-than-late, sleazed-up *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* knock-off is an epically disjointed dump of stillborn concepts, destined to relieve Paramount Pictures of the burden of unwanted cash. The film is too offensive for minors and too stupid for anyone over 3-years old, leaving absolutely no possibility for an audience. Pathetically rendered prostitutes, decapitations, urine attacks, sagging breasts, profanity and marginally racist caricatures populate every corner of this heap. Speaking of which, the dialogue in many scenes is so ungodly that Bakshi and crew superimposed wacky characters to chatter and mug at the bottom of the screen to distract from the so-called plot. The soundtrack of early '90s sexbeat techno is the steaming brown icing on this cinematic shitcake. (*ZC*)



CORRUPT

aka COP KILLER aka THE ORDER OF DEATH

Dir. Roberto Faenza / 1982

A bored punk rock rich kid with a bizarre guilt complex
engages in a series of dangerous mind games with a cop.

The narc squad is being decimated one by one by a masked killer in a cop uniform. Harvey Keitel plays a corrupt officer whose inherent paranoia is exacerbated by these events; he's worried that the investigation might draw attention to his extracurricular activities, which include having bought a secret apartment with a fellow officer (Eurowestern staple Leonard Mann) using bribe money. Enter John Lydon as a rather inept stalker. Lydon follows Keitel to his empty upscale apartment and confesses to the murders, but a little research reveals Lydon to be a serial confessor, a bored rich kid with some kind of perverse martyr complex. Keitel decides the kid knows too much and ties him up in the bathroom with a dog bowl until he can find out what his deal is.

The pairing of Sex Pistols frontman Lydon and iconic character actor Harvey Keitel is inspired; Keitel is easily agitated while Lydon is sneering and indifferent. Although Lydon is perfectly cast as the wealthy punk brat, he looks more like a member of Big Country than the Sex Pistols (parachute pants, a beret, new wave sunglasses). And he spends a lot of time unnecessarily shirtless (why? WHY?), which reveals some unexpected blobbiness.

Based on Hugh Fleetwood's chilling, minimalist thriller *The Order of Death*, this Italian anomaly is actually considered a giallo film in some circles (I disagree), and ambiguity concerning who's the cop killer and who's in control has led to comparisons with Nicholas Roeg/Donald Cammel's *Performance*. As an added bonus, some of the familiar dubbing voices from Italian exploitation films make an appearance. Of note is the fact that Lydon later penned a song called "The Order of Death" that would be used in the film *Hardware*. (*KJ*)

CRACK HOUSE

Dir. Michael Fischa / 1989

Drugs destroy everything.

Richard "Shaft" Roundtree introduces the VHS version with a stonefaced appeal to the viewer to avoid the pitfalls of crack/cocaine addiction. What follows is a perpetual catalog of drug abuse's merciless aftershocks, as young lovers Rick and Melissa find themselves helplessly embroiled in the hellish world of narcotics and gang warfare. By the film's climax, Rick is imprisoned and Melissa has sunken so deep in addiction that she's traded between dealers like an old, ratty coat.

The pair starts off happily romantic enough, content to have sex in Rick's mother's car while various portraits of Jesus watch them from the dash. After a vicious, chemical-fueled restroom battle, a high school punk with a spiked mohawk/devil lock combo refuses to ID the assailant. This is the first of countless bare-knuckle showdowns in the film showcasing several colorful characters like O.G. Jammer. The face-offs eventually escalate into blood-soaked machine-gun rumbles, and the drug use intensifies until freebasing seems as common as eating a Cheeto out of tanned cleavage, which is in itself plenty depressing, but quite possibly the film's only upbeat moment. (*ZC*)

CRASH 'N' BURN

Dir. Ross McLaren / 1977

A 16mm no-frills chronicle of
Toronto venue Crash 'n' Burn.

Deemed "the self-destructive document of Toronto's eponymous punk club," McLaren's film is an unstable, gnarled spate of performance footage from the dawn of Toronto's scene. The Dead Boys stumble angrily into their "All This and More," frontman Stiv Bators pausing to slice at his stomach with an oversized blade. The filmmaker holds the camera for dear life at the front of the stage as the band kicks into The Stooges' "Search and Destroy."

This primordial audio/visual account was taken not long after Amos Poe and Ivan Kral finished *The Blank Generation*, and like that film, the sound and images are unsynched. But considering how the claustrophobic mayhem of *Crash 'n' Burn* constantly knocks the camera's eye away from its subjects, it's not too serious of an issue. Other bands featured are The Boyfriends; Ontario legends and *Class of 1984* alumni Teenage Head; and The Diodes, the pioneering Canadian punk/new wave act whose members co-opened legendary Crash 'n' Burn nightclub in 1977. This documentary joins *The Last Pogo* (1978) in representing a major chapter in Canada's punk history, but is tragically difficult to view, as only a single 16mm print is known to exist. (*ZC*)

CRAZY THUNDER ROAD

Dir. Sogo Ishii / 1980

Japanese biker wars to the megamax.

Ishii is often referred to as "Japan's punk filmmaker," having earned the title with the impossibly ambitious *Burst City* and this,

his equally outrageous student film. Though *Crazy Thunder Road* places less emphasis on punk chaos, the movement's earmarks tear through almost every scene. The movie follows the exploits of a quasi-futuristic Tokyo motorcycle gang as their ranks deteriorate due to petty jealousies and painful betrayals. The members have adopted a '60s greaser/post-atomic style with the addition of bright blue mascara, a jarring contrast to their traditional pompadours and black leather jackets.

Gang leader Ken has stepped down after falling in love, leaving them in a chaotic search for identity. After being jumped by a rival crew, their former colleague Takeshi appears to help them reclaim their honor. That plan fails, and things degenerate into a series of increasingly brutal street wars. By the time Ken returns, the competing gangs have transformed the prefecture into shrapnel-strewn rubble, employing everything from futuristic arsenals to tossed bricks in an effort to wipe each other out. The climactic battle is particularly blazing, as a vengeful, armor-plated Ken unleashes a tank-grade bazooka amid a hail of machine-gun fire.

Ishii's first feature is a blur of anarchistic rage highlighted with unheralded flourishes of welfare bionics, queer militant nationalists and moments of supremely vicious high art. The soundtrack features a sampling of Japanese punk, fitting as Ishii had retired from playing music to study film. Shot on 16mm with an unreasonably large cast, Ishii's sprawling, maniacal highway epic caught the attention of mighty Toei Studios, who blew it up to 35mm and unleashed it like a rabid dog on an unwitting nation. (*ZC*)

CREEPTALES

Dir. Various / 1994

A horror anthology with six stories,
seven directors and an extra chromosome.

Two hunchbacked monsters have planned a video party, but the local movie rental shop has closed for the night. They head to the local cemetery and dig up the corpse of Uncle Munger, who was buried clutching a copy of their favorite VHS tape, *Creeptales*. Back at their apartment, the monsters enjoy several ghoulish video treats, including "The Snatcher," in which a clean-cut, rooster-topped punk purse snatcher (cartoon voice talent Tom Kenny) is eaten by a carnivorous handbag. The actor recorded the vocals for the theme to his neutered criminal spree, called "Party in the House of Skulls." Later, in "Groovy Ghoulie Garage," a couple guys that you'd see in a Denny's at 3 AM get stranded at a macabre auto repair shop. They follow the proprietor to a costume party where a mewling goth band churns out the headaches. *Creeptales* was completed a full decade before its 2004 video release. How the world waited so long is anybody's guess. (*ZC*)

CRIME KILLER

Dir. George Pan-Andreas / 1985

Pan-Andreas' fault.

A transparent vanity project for writer/director/star/dud George Pan-Andreas, a middle-aged, very Greek TV actor with delusions of marketability. The opening credits provide an immediate dose of entertainment, as a naked marble sculpture of Zeus (the god) fires lasers out of his eyes while superimposed over images of crumbling coliseums. Once the story of hard-hitting lawman Zeus (guess who) kicks in, it's a rollicking unintentional parody of '80s cop dramas, with dying partners, blustery chiefs, revoked badges, silk-suited crime lords and every other component one can swipe from the cop story assembly block. To Pan-Andreas' credit, the ESL-level dialogue is subtly unique: "We're never in the same place once!," "You have ten seconds to decide...and I suggest you *don't*!" and "How did you earn your living?...Walking down Fag Lane?" A grieving widow spends a full four seconds recalling the name of her husband who was just gunned down by a punk erupting from a garbage can (the film's only symbolic flourish). Women play topless tennis, corrupt oil sheiks call each other "comrade" in Russian accents, and top-ranking underworld officials perform kung fu torture on their own gardeners. At the end, Zeus saves the free world and steals the President of the United States' watch. A sincere salute to New World Pictures for giving a talentless would-be auteur like Pan-Andreas the chance to buy his way into straight-to-video obscurity. (*ZC*)

CRIME LORDS

Dir. Wayne Crawford / 1991

A racist cop visits a faraway land.

This film reveals its level of respectability in the first scene as a woman moans, "Read me my rights" while cheating on her husband with a policeman. Meanwhile, automotive crime specialist Elmo (director Crawford) uncovers a ring of import-auto-related murders. His hotshot young partner makes the astute observation: "Auto theft is the SHITS!" After an epic chop-shop shootout, Elmo is relieved from his duties on the force, so it's off to Hong Kong to find the source of the crimewave and win back his good name. It's unlikely that this Archie Bunker-esque cop could've had any positive reputation in the first place, as he seems exceedingly comfortable with Charlie Chan references, heavy doses of the word "chink," and the ability to provide keen observations, including "They all look the same..." It doesn't help when some Hong Kong metal/punk hybrids mug him while spouting broken English. *Crime Lords* is basically the USA Network version of Ridley Scott's *Black Rain*, not to mention a hundred other movies. Though this may be the only one that features a castration as the not-so-happy ending to a sensual massage. (*ZC*)

CRITTERS 3

Dir. Kristine Peterson / 1991

The carnivorous fuzzballs return to terrorize a tenement
building in the third installment of this sci-fi franchise.

Critters 3 hedges its bets on all fronts, so much so that the film hardens into a gray, inoffensive mush. There are flashes of ideas—good and bad—but ultimately the film is content to squat in the middle of the road. A motherless family is going through some tough times, what with dad distant and a daughter forced to grow up too fast while caring for her kid brother. As in many a horror film, troubled families bond and grow as a unit when battling a given foe, be it zombies, spectres, trolls or—in this case—space aliens. So here's the thing, pals: *Critters 3* attempts to hit all the horror benchmarks, but does so in a very lackadaisical manner. Wedged into a standard-issue horror flick are statements about slumlords, the class divide, single parent homes and so on, all packaged as limp social commentary. The attitude of the filmmakers is "Ehhh, might as well" as far as the plot and action are concerned. Even the gore and scares are ineffectual.

The blatant reference point for the entire *Critters* franchise is *Gremlins*, but never so glaringly as in the third installment; what started out as an influence has become obvious plagiarizing, a sure sign of sloth on the part of the filmmakers. Whereas the first two *Critters* succeeded with a can-do attitude and a plucky spirit, *Critters 3* simply fizzles and drags from the half-hour mark on, slowed to PBS tempo by hollow human drama. When the only returning character (podunk drunk-turned-galactic Crite hunter Charlie) emerges and tells his tale through a slapdash montage consisting of footage from the first two films, the movie becomes a statue spattered with bird droppings. That is, it reaches a standstill.

As you can imagine, the "punk" in this film is fully as half-assed as the rest of the package: a scumbag building manager named Frank wearing a vest crowded with buttons, a T-shirt adorned with a skull in a top hat and a cheap Joe Pesci tough-guy persona. You may ask yourself, "Why did they make this mook filth 'punk'?" The following exchange between two other characters in regards to Frank reveals the apotheosis of Hollywood's attitude towards the subculture:

LADY: Frank...what a waste of protein.

GIRL: Yeah, but he's a snappy dresser.

(SC)

CROCODILE DUNDEE

Dir. Peter Faiman / 1986

Displaced Aussie has misadventures in New York.

Crocodile Dundee is another in a long line of fish-out-of-water (let's just say "FOW") films. This time the fish is Mick Dundee (Paul Hogan), a rugged man's man who was raised by aborigines and knows his way around the bush of Australia. A news reporter (Linda Kozlowski) brings Dundee back to Manhattan with her, and gosh, is he ever out of place! Helpless with television, upscale bathrooms and the fact that blacks exist outside of tribes, Dundee gets himself into all sorts of misunderstandings and wacky conundrums. The end product (and this film certainly is a product) is a monotonous crawl, complete with a stiff romance between the reporter and Dundee. As the director limply beats the chest of a lame story (in part conceived by Hogan), the movie remains a flatline throughout.

When dealing with the FOW theme—as is the case in *Crocodile Dundee*—what begins as a simply boring movie quickly devolves into filmed rigor mortis. That being said, the actual punk in this film is pretty righteous: she's definitely not accurate by the standards of '80s punks, but at least she has some flair and verve. Crowned with straight, raven hair highlighted by a crimson streak, she's nothing short of raging. However, for reasons that can only be attributed to Hollywood ignorance, she's wearing a Twisted Sister T-shirt (displaying a zany Dee Snider caricature) under a stylish leather vest with a matching leather miniskirt and classic fishnets. This brief respite from the mundane "adventures" of Dundee goes by much too quickly, and we are immediately plunged back into a world where an Aussie hick doesn't know what cocaine and hookers are. Hilarious! *(SC)*

CROCODILE DUNDEE II

Dir. John Cornell / 1988

Dundee's a little homesick. Lucky for him, Colombian drug lords want revenge and he must hide out in his hometown of Walkabout Creek.

Your four new favorite movie moments:

1. Paul Hogan, reprising his role as Mick Dundee, punches a man through a closed door.
2. Dundee holds a man's penis at knifepoint in a urinal, while outside a girl with horse-mane hair talks on the phone to her mother.
3. Iggy Pop's "Real Wild Child" plays on the jukebox as Dundee proves he's a badass to "the coolest gang in New York" by fearlessly throwing a knife to split the mohawk of one of its members down the middle. Mind you, this intimidating punk has a skull and crossbones tattoo on the side of his head! Get 'em, Mick!
4. The gang helps Dundee sneak into a house by standing outside and barking. *(BC)*

CROSSING THE LINE

Dir. Gary Graver / 1989

An amateur motocross enthusiast is blamed for his friend's dirtbike accident.

Rick Hearst followed up his debut as the lead in Frank Henenlotter's classic *Brain Damage* with this dull dirtbike drama. He stars as a rich kid—also named Rick—who has a dysfunctional relationship with his dad (John Saxon) and serious love for the sport of motocross. One night while out dirtbikin', Rick and his buddy Josh get chased by the cops. The two split up to evade the police and Josh has a bummer bike wreck that sends him straight into a coma. For some reason, most everybody in town blames Rick for Josh's accident, even though it clearly wasn't his fault. Especially pissed are Josh's dad and brother. In the film's most exciting scene, tensions get so high that the great Paul L. "Bluto" Smith rips a toilet stall out of the ground. And that's about it for thrills.

There are a few peripheral punks, so all is not lost. Three quality examples hang out at a popular club called The Pink Slipper. Two of them have mohawks and they all wear somewhat exaggerated, but pretty believable, outfits. They don't have any dialogue, but are always lurking around in the background at the bar. During a later scene involving some mild motorcycle-related mayhem, a skinny, short-haired punk with a Cramps T-shirt and a button-laden black leather jacket can be seen in a crowd gawking at a blown-up street rod. Considering the pedigree of talent involved (both in front of and behind the camera), *Crossing The Line* doesn't deliver much in the way of exploitation or action, and isn't even enjoyable on a goofy '80s crap level. Instead, the picture crosses the line with too much half-assed drama and over-inflated emotion. *(SH)*

THE CROW II: CITY OF ANGELS

Dir. Tim Pope / 1996

The second in a series of lukewarm black-lipstick supernatural action fantasies for people who use Halloween lunchboxes as purses.

This desperate sequel nearly makes 1994's unfortunate hit look like a real movie. In the two-year interim since the last film, surviving waif Sarah is now a full-grown goth tattoo artist inking swirls onto shaved scalps in a shop owned by a squat 50-year-old Lollapalooza cast-off. A red mohawked leather hipster shows off her "flash" while waiting for her next "piece." Back at the local crimelords' HQ, Curve (Iggy Pop) and other assorted fruity, dreadlocked ne'er-do-wells gyrate in a drug-addled stupor among drag queens and mohawked troglodytes. Curve has a brand-new crow tattoo on his chest, which lands him in undeserved hot water when our hero (Vincent Perez) starts leaving bird-shaped calling cards behind after each act of vigilante justice. The new Crow is a French halfwit who's risen from the dead to avenge the murder of his young son at the hands of the local syndicate. Their shirtless leader lives in an Egyptian-flavored penthouse with his robed psychic companion. Below them, a criminals-only dance club is bursting with faux-shockery like black cocaine, leather whippings and spectator lesbian intercourse.

The film reaches its artistic apex when The Crow corners rock legend Iggy Pop, who says "Fuck you, bird dick!" Skewing further towards the Insane Clown Posse demographic than the first installment, *City of Angels* features infinitely more aimless S&M and "erotic" slow-motion ass-shaking. On the other hand, we're treated to a dog wearing a skull mask, so it's not a complete loss. The VHS version follows the feature with a 20-minute tribute to Brandon Lee, but the honor in being commemorated as part of this trashpile is beyond dubious; why not just dig up his grave and piss in his eye-sockets? (*ZC*)

CRUISING

Dir. William Friedkin / 1980

A heterosexual cop goes undercover in
New York's leather-daddy jungle.

Al Pacino stars in the sleazy, violent exploration of the gay club underworld that infuriated the queer community upon the film's initial release. Gay rights groups even appeared on set, protesting the shoot by waving picket signs, shouting disruptive chants and throwing Ziploc bags filled with urine. The *Exorcist* director's unrepentant cinematic piledriver was just as reviled by critics and audiences that weren't prepared to see a major Hollywood star grind against shirtless men on the dance floor, much less do poppers and unwittingly engage in watersports.

Following several vicious sex murders, rookie cop Steve Burns (Pacino) is sent to investigate incognito, adopting the standard jeans, tank top and colored hanky of the late '70s thrill-seeking man's man. His investigation is thorough ("Hips or lips?"), and Burns find himself in uncontrolled situations that are both dangerous and unexpectedly invigorating. Several factions of the underground all-male scene are represented with varying levels of accuracy, among them bikers, bears and even a scattering of collared, semi-futuristic new wavers looking for kicks in the darkest corners. Meanwhile, the slayings continue, body parts washing up in the river with alarming regularity.

Beyond the controversy, production tales of the film are shocking. The plot is based on actual gay slashings that took place in New York between 1962 and 1979. While researching these crimes for his film, Friedkin learned that an actor/radiologist (Paul Bateson) he'd used for a small part in *The Exorcist* had confessed to the murders and was awaiting trial. Friedkin visited Bateson in prison and gathered more material for his new project. The Germs recorded several songs for the movie's soundtrack, though only "Lion's Share" was used. After the initial 140-minute cut was presented to United Artists, they demanded that Friedkin excise 40 minutes, resulting in major aspects of the plot being compromised. When he later returned to assemble his original director's cut, he found that the studio had thrown the unrestored footage in the dumpster.

Love it or hate it, *Cruising* is a historically valuable, irrefutable low-art masterpiece, with jolting performances and some sordid, outrageous moments...including a beating from a cop in a jockstrap that you will never, NEVER forget. Don't believe the negative hype of yesteryear; three decades have passed and it's time to reassess the first big-budget major studio film to feature man-on-man fisting. (*ZC*)

CRUISING BAR

aka MEAT BAR aka MEET MARKET

Dir. Robert Menard / 1989

French losers try to get laid
in various bars and nightclubs.

This movie will make you want to kill yourself; with each scene, the filmgoer comes up with new methods to induce suicide. The idea of cruising bars for sex is already depressing, but imagine how much more disgusting it is when you have to watch four very homely French men do it. One dude has rough sex with a woman who looks like the stepmom of someone you knew in middle school. The man tries to hold his ejaculate back, but it's too difficult. That's the joke. A clueless horny man accidentally winds up at clubs where he doesn't exactly fit in. One is a cowboy bar. The other is a gay bar where a leather daddy chases him on all fours around a bed with giant penis bedposts. He ends up outside a punk club where some serious slam-dancing takes place. A girl spikes the man's receding hairline. In the subtitled version, a character yawns and the subtitle reads "yawning." Maybe they felt that yawning sounds too much like that messy French language and the audience would think that they were missing out on some snappy dialogue. (BC)

A CRY FOR LOVE

Dir. Paul Wendkos / 1979

Drugs and alcohol triumph again.

Susan Blakely stars as single mom/amphetamine aficionado Polly, constantly living in the red. Having exhausted all resources and alienated her friends, she literally stumbles across Tony (Powers Boothe), an alcoholic of equally self-destructive powers. The two of them take turns spiraling into suicidal frenzies, rolling into regretful scenarios and public meltdowns.

Fired from her job and on the brink of losing her children, Polly rushes to score more Dexedrine from her connection. He's seated at a corner of a restaurant venue that bears a suspicious resemblance to LA's legendary Hong Kong Café, watching the bouncing crowd of punks rage to a power pop set from The Know. Despite the general calculated heaviness of the film, this scene is infectiously upbeat and the assembled teens—including Darby Crash—make it as genuinely fun as any segment from an '80s party comedy. While Polly makes her tragic purchase in a back room, a punk in sunglasses follows her in to caution that she'll "probably end up slitting her wrists." This decidedly grim drug fable was produced by *Du-beat-e-o* director Alan Sacks. (*ZC*)

CYBERNATOR

Dir. Robert Rundle / 1991

An $80 plagiaristic tribute to *Blade Runner*.

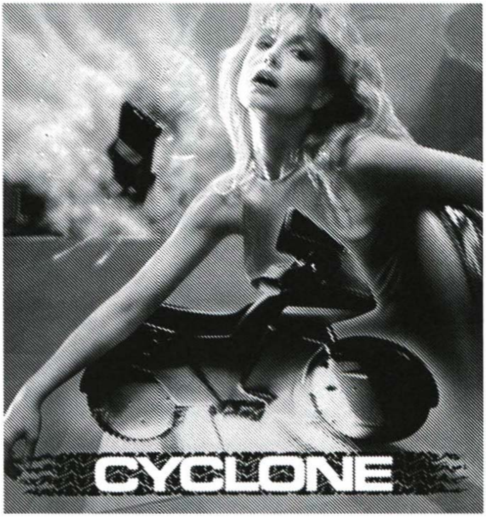
This cautionary technophobic fantasy was shot when we feared that computers would destroy the world, and released shortly before they did. A pack of angry cyborgs are murdering key political figures, and robophobic police detective McCord (Lonnie Schuyler) is the only man who can stop them. At his favorite strip club, tinfoil-faced, bleach-haired teenagers stare at a baby-oiled female bodybuilder as she flexes her buttocks. When semi-mechanized violence breaks out, a devil-locked scumbag in studded leather is among the few survivors. The two "borgies" responsible end up on the morgue slab themselves; watch for one of them giving a post-autopsy blink directly into the camera. McCord's investigation leads to an enormous cyberconspiracy, largely run by Colonel Peck, who is played by Hollywood's most masculine presence, former Marlboro Man William Smith. Though he'd already made a career of earning his car payments in drive-in exploitation features like *Swinging Barmaids* and *Invasion of the Bee Girls*, it still hurts a bit to see Smith reduced to appearing in monumentally disposable crud like this. He gives a dependably effective performance in his small role, sandwiched between co-stars' hack posturing and fogged-lens sex approximations. (*ZC*)

CYCLONE

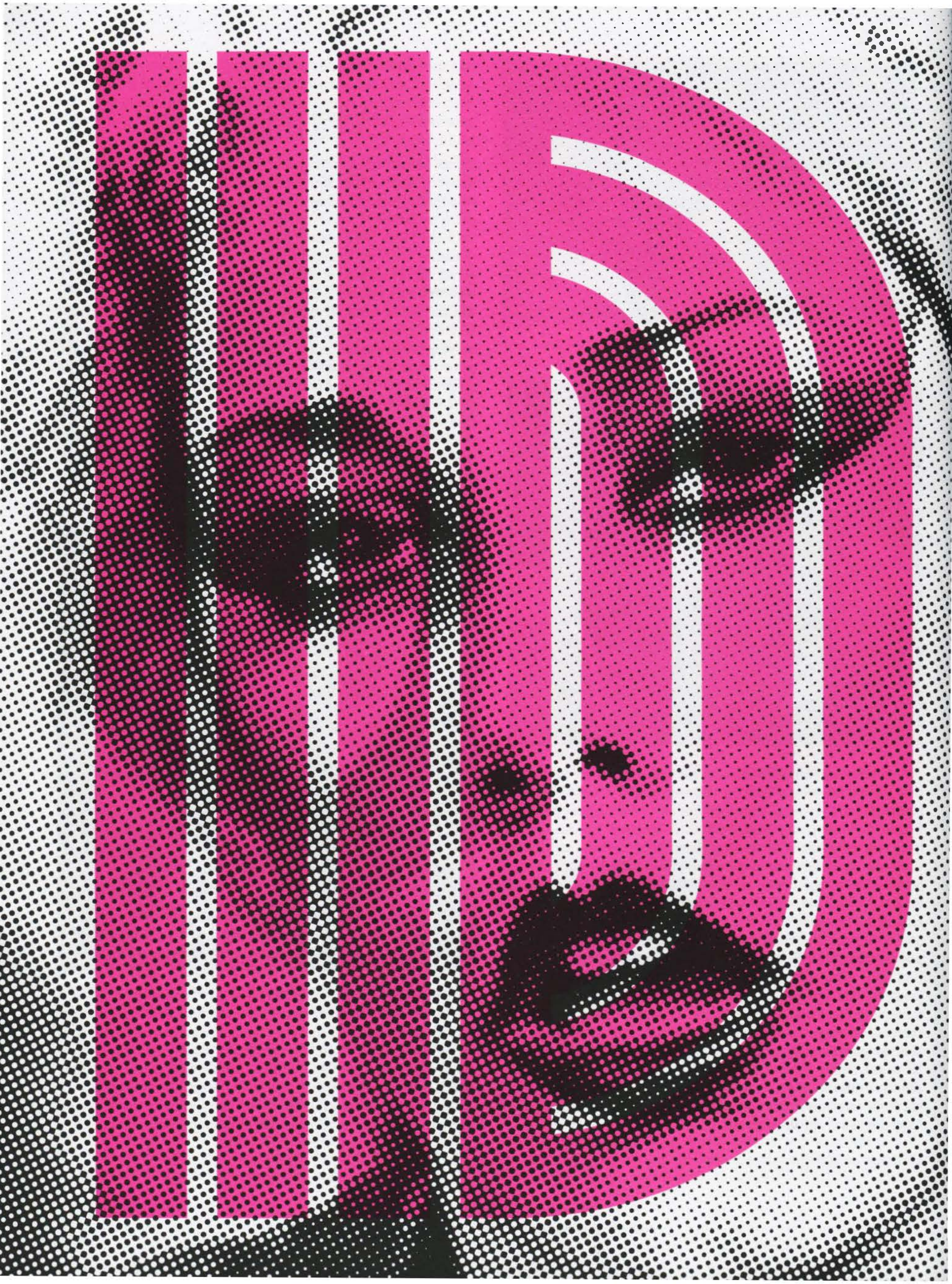
Dir. Fred Olen Ray / 1987

A dead scientist's motorcycle causes much trouble for his grieving girlfriend.

Before director Ray completely succumbed to the glossy falsehoods of cable-caliber, shot-on-video softcore sexploitation, he was responsible for some unnecessarily entertaining drive-in trash. And, partly by default, *Cyclone* may be his two-fisted action masterpiece. Tech nerd Rick (*Re-Animator*'s Jeffrey Combs) and his fiancée Teri (Heather Thomas) head out to punk hangout The Lava Club to celebrate the completion of his new supercycle, the Cyclone. The place is packed with spazzes, goths, art fags, preppies and street mutants, and the house band (actual LA gimmick-group Haunted Garage) includes a heavy-metal druid, a new wave b-boy and a leering 40-year-old in a skeleton suit. Rick and Teri are viciously assaulted by two shadowy punk assassins; an attack that only she survives. As it turns out, the criminal underworld is desperate to get its hands on the Cyclone, but Teri soon uncovers Rick's extensive training video that teaches the viewer how to operate the futuristic megabike. En route to deliver the Cyclone to Rick's secret associates, Teri is given the chance to strut the cycle's myriad features when the pseudo-punks reappear. This is the first of many inevitable motorchases, the best of which climaxes in a stunningly brutal laser execution.



Watch for Martin Landau in one of his "I'm-too-good-for-this-shit" '80s roles, and get what enjoyment you can from another C-grade performance from Troy Donahue, whose voice is dubbed in for no discernible reason. The marginally wacky government agent duo is played by Tim Conway Jr. and Ronald Reagan's son Michael. The film's best performance may be in the cold-blooded new wave hitman, a rare speaking role from longtime stuntman Dar Robinson who passed away in an accident just prior to the film's release. (*ZC*)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DANCE CRAZE

Dir. Joe Massot / 1981

A goodtimey celebration of the
UK's second-wave ska explosion.

London's 2 Tone period is well-covered in this performance documentary including The Specials, The Selecter, The Bodysnatchers and more. A comically adult narration leads into a bouncy number from the movement's popular ambassadors Madness. Footage of the inexhaustible young crowd is the the film's highlight, as even detractors of ska can't deny the exuberance of its fans. The audience is a massive, indiscriminate sea of fresh, intent faces belonging to textbook skins, preps and even some head-bobbing punks. Like *Urgh! A Music War, Dance Craze* is really just a well-constructed smorgasbord of expertly-shot concert footage strong enough to give the viewer a near-experience of actual live sweat and entertainment. This movie just has a lot more trombones. (*ZC*)

DANCING BAREFOOT

Dir. Zdenek Suchy / 1995

Patti Smith Group guitarist Ivan Kral explores
New York punk history through his own.

This project, commissioned by and for Czech television, follows Kral from the East Coast to Eastern Europe, where he spent his youth in Prague. Kral's musical career started in 1963 with the Beatles-influenced Czech group Saze, but it wasn't until he entered the CBGB circle that he moved in the direction he'd become known for. At first, he joined with Venus & the Serpent (who would become Blondie), but after a matter of months he met with the members of the Patti Smith Group and secured his place in rock history. Contemporaries from Talking Heads, the Ramones and Blondie speak on punk's fledgling phase, with early footage of the groups (some shot by Kral for the 1976 film *The Blank Generation*) shown while they reminisce in voiceover. The documentary lays out an impressive bond between the members of the band as well as the people in their sphere. Everyone—especially Patti Smith herself—speaks of Kral with reverence, and he's equally lauded as a musician, a person and a creative force. (*ZC*)

DANDY

Dir. Peter Sempel / 1988

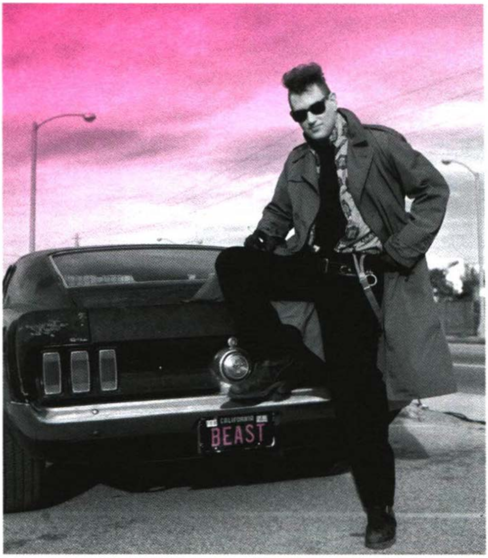
Nick Cave and Blixa Bargeld anchor
a collection of songs and images.

Film artist/documentarian/music enthusiast Sempel uses the powerful presences of longtime collaborators Cave and Bargeld as central points while he veers between footage of dance, culture shock and chicken decapitation. The slim, semi-conscious Bargeld—dressed in tight leathers—talks to small children on a bus bench. A woman throws a fish out a speeding car's window. People are captured candidly on the street, including young punks. Several songs by the lead's bands Einstürzende Neubauten and The Bad Seeds are featured, as well as tracks from art-dance group Yello. Nina Hagen and Lene Lovich pop up throughout, even throwing in an acapella performance. (*ZC*)

DANGEROUSLY CLOSE

Dir. Albert Pyun / 1986

Students at an upper-class high school take things
over the edge when they form a zealous vigilante group.



Another '80s film featuring 35-year-old high school students at war. The Sentinels, a group of watchdog youth, are keeping the neighborhood a little too safe by cracking down hard on anyone they feel might pose a threat. High school newspaper editor Danny runs an article that raises their ire. His best friend Krooger is a loudmouthed goon with a wild fro-hawk and a customized, rusted '70s hot rod. He enters the school parking lot blaring mid-tempo rock from rooftop speakers and screams "Nookie!" as a girl walks by. He's such a punk maniac, he even offers a joint to a motorcycle cop. Yeeeooow! When Sentinels leader Randy invites Danny to spend time with their crew, things get sticky. They warn him to keep Krooger under control, and then drag him along on one of their "street cleaning" details. Their token loose cannon is Ripper, an overfueled jock spazzoid who screams and punches at anything within two blocks.

At school, Krooger is concerned that The Sentinels are going to turn Danny into "a twinkie." He follows this up by instigating a major fistfight with Randy in the school kitchen. Later, he tries to make points with a cheerleader by offering her tickets to a Dead Kennedys show. Disappointed by her rejection, he returns to his car to find a dead cat wrapped around the steering wheel.

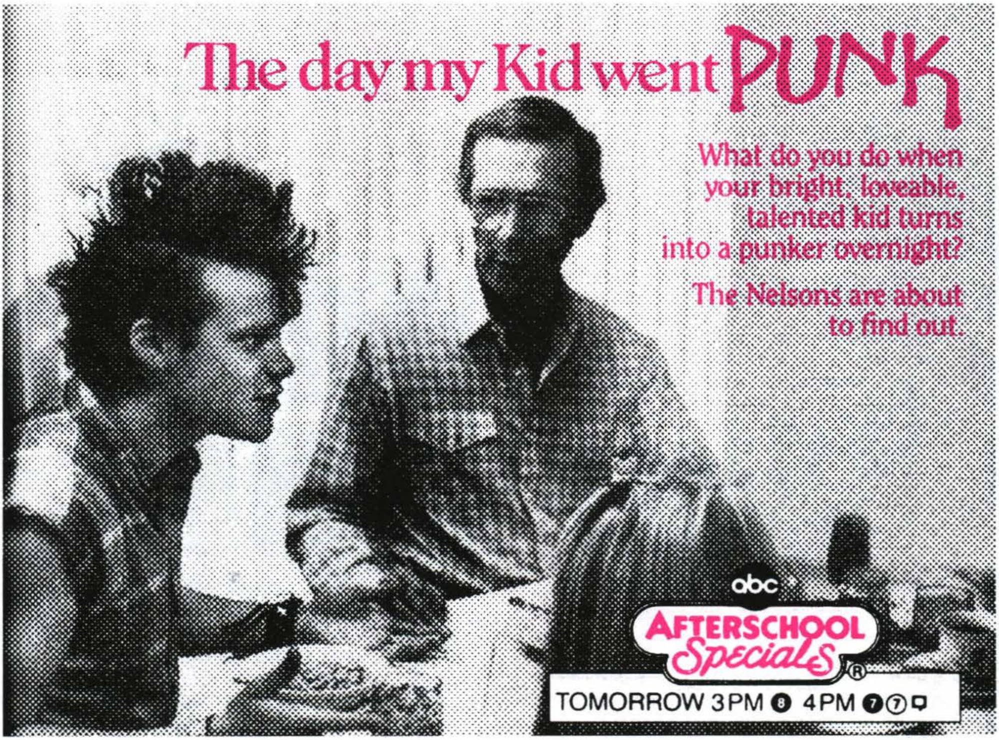
This was the third feature from Albert Pyun, who became a notorious Z-auteur and would—to his credit—feature punks and new wavers in several of his other films. Watch closely for two of the punks from *Return of the Living Dead* (Miguel A. Núñez Jr. and Thom Mathews) in straightlaced roles. Mathews would go on to appear in the sequel to *ROTLD* and ten more Pyun films. (*ZC*)

THE DAY MY KID WENT PUNK

Dir. Fern Field / 1987

A neglected nerd turns Quincy Punk
to assert his individuality. He fails miserably.

A mainstay in the world of Afterschool Specials (she produced *The Wave*), Fern Field's television ode to "the problem of punk rock"


The day my Kid went PUNK
What do you do when your bright, loveable, talented kid turns into a punker overnight?
The Nelsons are about to find out.
abc
AFTERSCHOOL Specials®
TOMORROW 3PM 8 4PM 7 ⑦

came a little late in the game, but it's proof that even a decade after punk's emergence, adults still had little idea what to make of it. Jay Underwood (the semi-retard in *The Boy Who Could Fly*) stars as Terry, a parentally ignored high school symphony geek who starts feeling dissatisfied and turns to rock 'n' roll for the answer. Inspired by the female attention commonly reserved for "bad boys," he decides to revamp his look with hilarious results.

See, Terry doesn't ease into his new lifestyle with a few bangles and an earring; he goes on anti-beige patrol in a major way. He shuffles his penny loafers into the bus station bathroom and—a can of pink Halloween hairspray and one all-pleather outfit later—Terry's ready to join the ranks of the rejected. And then he shows up for his new position at a ritzy hotel with no idea why he might suddenly seem unsuitable for the job. Luckily, the hotel owner is the kindly governor from *Benson*, so it's easy to get away with pretty much anything, even if the hotel receptionist is against the so-called "Ziggy Ziggy Sputnik" look-alike in their midst. On his nights off, he forms a rock band that is typical Quincy Punk tone-deaf tackiness.

The kicker is that his mom's a psychologist who happens to be giving a lecture on "The Punk Rock Syndrome: How Parents Can Avoid It" at the very hotel where Terry works as a children's counselor. When word gets out that her son is the resident weirdo, she has to think up a gimmick fast to avoid being cast as a fraud. So she arranges a panel of her son and his bandmates where they talk about how they turned to punk because they had problems at home, et cetera, et cetera. And as preachy as the Afterschool Specials can sometimes be, here's where the moral ground of this one gets a little shaky; it's all about acceptance, but the general message is that if you *act* accepting, eventually the kids will become normal again.

Of note is that one of the punk kids on the panel is Josh Freese, who is reputed to be the same Freese who two years later would be drumming for the new lineup of The Vandals and, later, Devo. (*KJ*)

DEAD BOYZ CAN'T FLY

Dir. Cecil Howard (as Howard Winters) / 1992

Innocents are held hostage in an office building
for absolutely no reason.

New York hatches its latest sociopath in Goose, a mom-damaged, bleach-n-warpaint part-time transvestite/full-time maniac who revels in intimidation and senseless murder. His two criminal colleagues take the more traditional thug chic route, one sporting a Misfits-era Glenn Danzig portrait on his leather vest. The trio invades a dentist's office, sell drugs to children and shoot a janitor, who luckily happens to be a fearless, unkillable Vietnam vet who will return to end their reign of urban terror.

Ninety-eight percent of the movie takes place in one building. As the psychopathic hambones move from one violent act to the next, the story unfolds like an overacted play based on hyper-sensationalized headline news. If cold-blooded killers actually acted and dressed like this, death row would be the most popular drag cabaret ticket in town. (*ZC*)

DEAD END DRIVE-IN

Dir. Brian Trenchard-Smith / 1986

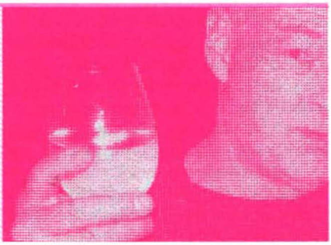
A young couple tries to escape from a drive-in movie theater that has been converted into a federally operated concentration camp.

There are punks galore in this allegorical Australian *Mad Max* variation about a drive-in movie theatre with a strict No Exit policy. Located somewhere between *Escape From New York* and a *Twilight Zone* episode, *Dead End Drive-In* is set in a bleak future where society has deteriorated to the level of the first *Mad Max* film, but hasn't yet declined into becoming a vast wasteland, as in the sequels. Anarchist gangs called Car Boys battle cops and tow truck drivers while stealing parts to assemble their own vehicles. Crabs is an easy-going guy in a black leather jacket who doesn't care much about the current state of affairs and is more interested in getting his girlfriend Carmen into the back seat. Crabs and Carmen hit the local Star Drive-In with thoughts of sweet love in their hearts and pants. At dawn, after a night of rocking their hot-rod, the young couple discovers that there's no getting out of this joint! It seems that the government has converted drive-ins into prison camps for undesirable segments of society to be incarcerated. The internees are fed a constant stream of sleazy/cheesy movies (most of them directed by Trenchard-Smith!), greasy fast food, beer and drugs. Nobody seems to care, but Crabs is determined to find a way out.

Based on a short story by award-winning author and screenwriter Peter Carey, this film is a thinly veiled critique of modern society and Australian politics. The social commentary is pretty obvious, but its inclusion makes *Dead End Drive-In* a much more thoughtful entry into the genre than other *Mad Max* knockoffs. Besides the politically empowering message, there's a lot to enjoy about the film. There are tons of totally awesome punks with all sorts of crazy get-ups, plus a lot of badass rockers and new wavers, all of whom belie the straight rock soundtrack. Crabs is a goofy little guy and a welcome change of pace from the "strong silent types" normally cast in this kind of film. The set design and cinematography are excellent, giving the drive-in a grimy, neon-tinged appearance. Trenchard-Smith (*Stunt Rock*) really loves cars and stunts. His automobile fetish is evident throughout with lots of dazzling vehicles on display. While we may know that the titular drive-in has been converted into a prison, thankfully our hero doesn't catch on until it's far too late for anything but a mammoth, explosive bust-out. (*SH*)

BRIAN TRENCHARD-SMITH

Director – *DEAD END DRIVE-IN*



BTS: Let me set my memory banks back to 1985...it had been a project in development. New South Wales had a film commission that was actively engaged in making movies happen. They had put together a consortium of investors, and there was another director attached to it that lost faith in the project after three drafts of the script. So when things went wrong in Australia, people would often come to me [laughs]. I'd taken over four films after the director had departed early in the shoot. All we had at that point was a patched together script and the probability that we could shoot at this drive-in. And away we went.

DAM: Almost everything happens in one location, right?

For the most part. We were shooting at the Matraville Drive-In, which had closed and was scheduled to be torn down and turned into a bunch of flats. So we immortalized it before it was wiped off the face of the earth. Systematically, all the drive-ins had started closing so we just had to find one that hadn't been totally demolished. There was one in North Sydney that was still in operation, so we went with the dead one.

We put up as much fencing as we could to block out the surrounding suburb, and we got local graffiti artists to come in and "decorate." We recruited young punks who were also graffiti artists to come in and help us do that. There was some publicity given to the fact that we had a bunch of people there spraypainting the place, as well as the fact that we had 400 wrecked cars from the side of the road that we'd towed to the drive-in. It was exciting...like creating our own civilization in a way. As I understand it, the police came to arrest one of the painters whose work contained symbols that they recognized from his vandalism outside of the shoot. We managed to get him released.

And where did the actors come from?

We recruited actual punks as our "talent," to play the extras. Some of them are the genuine article, like the lady with the shaved head and sprayed-on makeup or the guy with the shaved-down teeth. And others are well-adjusted kids from the suburbs just made up to look the part [laughs], just having a good time doing it and quite happy to get back into their own clothes at the end of the day. I had a very good production designer and costume person who had connections in the punk world, so that's where those kids came from.

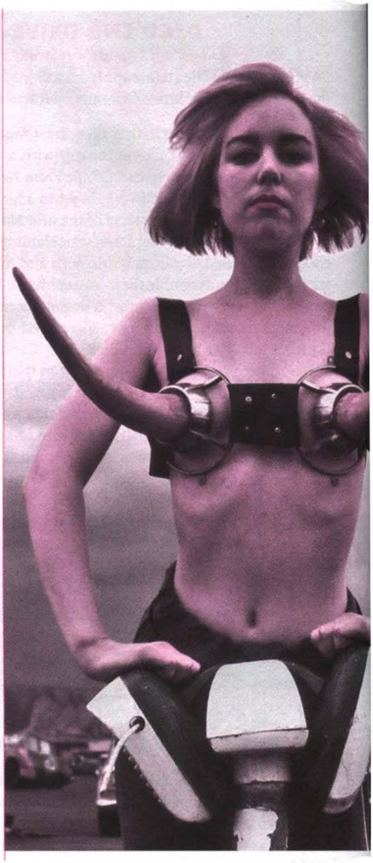
There was one mix-up in communication. I said, "I'd like 20 or so punks, but please make them a little older this time," as opposed to the teenage ones we'd been using. So I wanted them in their 20s. That's what I meant. So of course, the morning of the shoot, I was waiting for my punks to arrive on set and this body of people appear out of the dressing area wearing garish clothes and car parts. And as they come towards me, I realized that not a single one of them was under 50. Something had clearly been lost in translation. They were a sorry bunch of bewildered people wanting to make an extra dollar or two that day.

What did people make of it?

Well, first off, he film was completely misunderstood and mistreated by the media. Initially, the film censor wanted to ban it to anyone under 18, which was the most restrictive rating at that time. A couple of my films have suffered from that; *The Man from Hong Kong* was hit with it because no one quite got my sense of humor. *Dead End Drive-In* was seen as a celebration of the negative values of youth, according to the censor at that time. The press didn't get it, the distributor didn't put much behind it, and even the poster art did everything it could to make the film look like something other than what it was. One version made it look like some kind of wild party movie.

The film died pretty quickly in Australia, despite being recognized by some American critics. The Australian screenings I saw were hardly populated at all. The distributor premiered the film in a multiplex theater that was still under construction. There was considerable renovation still going on outside, so it was actually difficult to even find the entrance. That coupled with the fact that it should have never been released at Christmas... this was a dysphoric film about a corrupt society and government. They took a gamble, decided that they'd see if the youth would come see it over the holiday season. They gave it hardly any publicity and it failed. So when I went to see it—in the smallest of the theaters at the half-built multiplex—there was just a scattering of people, all of whom were over 30 [laughs].They thought they were coming to see a horror film or something. There were a bunch of guys who were quite disgruntled and thought they'd walked into the wrong movie.

However, the lead Ned Manning was a former schoolteacher and he arranged a screening. There were all types of teenagers there, from 14 to 18. And they totally got it. They loved it, they roared with laughter where they were supposed to and they picked up on all the social satire. And this is a film that was totally critical of its target audience, pointing out all the negative values of teens and taking that to an extreme. While it was first saying that the government would create these internment camps, it was also saying that teenagers would happily settle into this subsidized life of junk food, music videos, violent movies, alcohol, drugs and sex whenever they wanted it. I suppose I'm still a secret teenager lurking in an old man's body.



DEAD MAN WALKING

Dir. Gregory Brown (aka Gregory Dark) / 1988

In a plague-ridden post-apocalyptic future, the daughter of an important politician is abducted by a contaminated convict, putting her fate in the hands of her chauffer and a gruff mercenary.

Along with *Street Asylum*, *Dead Man Walking* was one of porn director Gregory Dark's (better known as half of the Dark Brothers) "legit" features. While neither film is particularly spectacular, they both feature enough humor, weirdness and strange casting to make them of interest to those inclined toward such lowbrow entertainment. *Dead Man Walking* is set in a corporate-controlled "near future" where disease has split society into the healthy (and wealthy) and the infected. The diseased population is quarantined in "plague zones" that resemble a Wild West town combined with a city dump. Interspersed throughout the film are satirical news bits (Just like in *RoboCop*: As a matter of fact, I think the same anchorman is used.) that underscore the film's main plot and also expand on the grim futuristic setting.

Decker (Brion James) is a deranged "Zero Man" who escapes (along with the great Sy Richardson) from police custody. Decker has crazy day-glo orange hair and a scruffy beard and looks like an extremely hung over, strung-out clown sans facepaint. He shoots some cops, steps on another's head and kidnaps Leila (Pamela Ludwig of *Over the Edge*!), daughter of an important politician. Leila's chauffer Chazz (Jeffrey Combs) tracks the escaped convicts, but enlists the help of John Luger (Wings Hauser), an infected soldier of fortune who spends most of his time hanging out in a dreary bar where the patrons occupy themselves by playing mumblety-peg and Russian roulette. Chazz and Luger hop in a space-age car (a souped-up Pacer with extra headlights) and head off into the plague zone in hot pursuit of Leila. Before rescuing the abducted woman, Chazz and Luger are buried up to their necks in sand and left for dead. They also stop at a plague zone cabaret called Café Death that's populated by infected punks (some with mohawks and liberty spikes), ugly fat androgynous weirdos, people wearing futuristic coolie hats, hairy guys in ripped pirate shirts and a few folks with umbrellas in a scene that plays like a Costco production of *Blade Runner*. (*SH*)

THE DEAD NEXT DOOR

Dir. J.R. Bookwalter / 1988

A zombie-hunting task force is outnumbered and outgunned.

Homemade horror heavyweight J.R. Bookwalter kicked off a long string of lesser schlock offerings with this ambitious, well-paced and surprisingly professional feature. A blaring tribute to George Romero's original *Living Dead* trilogy, *The Dead Next Door* opens in a world overrun by lurching, flesh-eating corpses. The government struggles to maintain order, creating a police state in which militant zombie control organizations patrol the populated areas. One such group, led by the rectangular-jawed soldier Raimi (wink, yawn), loses an officer to a hungry cadaver played by *Evil Dead II* co-writer and longtime Sam Raimi collaborator Scott Spiegel. The group returns to headquarters, sets off on a mission to find an antidote, and ends up warring with a nefarious religious cult led by a sunglasses-wearing wingnut named Reverend Jones.

The gore is relentless and pretty damn grisly, with seemingly limitless inventiveness triumphing over a double-digit budget, but even more impressive is the sheer numbers of extras (both living and dead) that Bookwalter was able to coerce into appearing for assumedly zero cash. He even manages to get a half-a-dozen zombies to trample the White House grounds. One of the most memorable stiffs is visible only once, toward the end of the film: a spiky blond punk zombie with a dangling earring and a deeply hungry stare. The rest of the undead don't have such a flair for style, instead opting for blood-soaked pattern knits and scabby flannels. After stirring up public interest with this incredible debut, Bookwalter would take a sharp dive downward with one-note rear-enders like *Zombie Cop*. (*ZC*)

DEAD WEEKEND

Dir. Amos Poe / 1995

An unshaven cop indulges in gratifying space sex.

In the near future, the government's military wing True World Force evacuates the city due to an alien threat. The interstellar attack has arrived in the form of a lone Asian supermodel who captures the attention of TWF officer Weed (Stephen Baldwin). The extraterrestrial shapeshifts regularly enough to provide a multi-ethnic variety of Cinemax-style erotic scenes for Baldwin to indulge in. As the radio broadcasts its urban eviction notice, a neon green-haired thug and his friends make their looting plans, but leave out the part where they'll later be gunned down by police. His violent death doesn't stop him from popping up as an extra in a later scene. And then yet again, but he's still outnumbered by bedroom scenes accompanied by blistering sex jazz. (*ZC*)

DEADLINE

Dir. Mario Azzopardi / 1981

An awkwardly constructed lowbrow drama about
a miserable horror writer's marriage problems.

As dreary as that sounds, the film is elevated by frequent cutaway scenes to the lead's short stories, each rich with gruesome and/or inspired imagery. Nuns devour a priest's quivering organs; a black goat telekinetically forces a man into a grain thresher; etc. But the most entertaining is the punk segment, where a Nazi researcher enlists a cartoonishly robotic new wave act to execute his world domination plot. The group rages through their hypnotic, herky-jerky anthem as the mad scientist carts in three hobos to serve as an unwilling audience. As hoped, the band's intense crescendo causes the vagrants to lose control of their bowels (in graphic detail). At the song's apex, one lucky wino's entire digestive tract bursts through his shirt. The face painted robo-chic musicians regard the situation in detached amusement, posing before an enormous swastika banner. (*ZC*)

DEADTIME STORIES

Dir. Jeffrey Delman / 1986

A Mother Goose-inspired horror anthology.

Like most '80s horror omnibuses, this is a mixed bag with holes in it. The third and final installment in the collection is a souped-up Goldilocks adaptation that features a quick shot of a teen carcass sporting a chain necklace and blue poodlecut. In the story, a family of three criminals (the Baers, naturally) escape from prison and return to their old hideout. They're surprised to find it's now occupied by the young Goldi Lox, a telekinetic psychopath with a collection of formerly horny male cadavers, including the aforementioned unlucky punk. Now a quartet, the murderous clan are being hunted by policemen Lieutenant Jack B. Nimble and Captain Jack B. Quick. Gluhhh...

This portion of the movie is filled with more sound effects and wack-ass sight gags than a Leslie Nielsen film festival, though the mentally retarded Baby Baer adds a nice touch when he plays she-loves-me-she-loves-me-not by ripping the fingers off a human hand. See the punk corpse listed in the credits as "Punk Corpse." This carcass was played by Ivan de Prume, who'd go on to play drums in White Zombie, thus establishing the only link Rob Zombie would ever have to an entertaining horror film. (*ZC*)

DEATH AND THE COMPASS

Dir. Alex Cox / 1992

Cox's version of the Jorge Luis Borges short story, expanded
to feature-length from his BBC television production.

Commissioned by the BBC as part of a series of Borges adaptations dubiously commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Spanish Invasion of the New World, *Death and the Compass* is a chaotic, colorful disaster of a film. Standing in stark contrast to the meticulously constructed puzzle-box stories of Borges, the film's narrative structure and visual style are loose, messy and anarchistic. Both the original text and the film make allusions to a wide body of occult literature and deal with the Kabbalistic search for order in chaos. The story follows the great detective Lönnrot as he investigates a series of murders that are committed in the four corners of a city, matched to the four Hebrew letters of the name of God. The city is occupied almost exclusively by felons and police, and one of the shadowed criminals is a grim punk lurking in the background of a bar. The killer, transformed from a sort of gentleman hood in the original story to a bizarre sci-fi supervillain who speaks through some kind of futuristic vocoder mask, deliberately leaves clues at the crime scenes that capture the imagination of the detective. Lönnrot ultimately proves too clever for his own good after pinpointing what he thinks will be the time and place of the final murder, only to discover he has been set up. The killer has lured Lönnrot there to murder him...

Alex Cox embellishes the ending, making numerous allusions to another Borges story, *El Aleph*, while slipping in subtle, esoteric references to Borges' work throughout the film. Borges' writing is so densely literary that few filmmakers have attempted adaptations. Cox deliberately left out one of the story's more cinematic scenes where Lönnrot finds himself trapped in a hall of mirrors. In his biography *X Films*, Cox writes that the "scene seemed like a homage on Borges' part to *The Lady From Shanghai*.... It is brilliantly written but it was too daunting to attempt to emulate the work of Welles. So I left it out entirely." He does share Welles' penchant for long, uninterrupted takes, but the shots have an ineffectively ragged and improvised feel to them, relying exclusively on ambient sound recordings. The tracking shots allow for an intriguing richness of detail like when Lönnrot walks through a hotel to a crime scene and the camera captures a police officer pissing in the bathroom. Another notable sequence follows Lönnrot as he walks through the labyrinthine police headquarters and in one room we see a masked luchador being brutally beaten by his interrogators. Shot in Mexico, the film's production design is garish and gaudy, bursting with bright, primary colors. Peter Boyle plays Lönnrot, wearing the world's ugliest blue suit. Miguel Sandoval plays his boss and wears an equally atrocious yellow outfit, though he is able to pull off the ostentatious style a bit better than the chubby, balding Boyle. (*TS*)

DEATH WARMED UP

Dir. David Blyth / 1984

A mind-control experiment leads to
vicious murder and bloody payback.

This Kiwi answer to the more established international genre scene sets up its loopy parameters in the first ten minutes. Blyth's film engages immediately with ravings about immortality from Dr. Archer Howell, a mad scientist played with cheesy relish by Gary Day. "We are the new messiahs!," he screams to a shocked colleague who wants no part in this madness and soon departs. Howell then brainwashes the man's son Michael (Michael Hurst), turning him into a teenage terminator who shotguns both of his parents to smithereens. The boy is packed off to an asylum while Howell slips away to a deserted island and launches his company Trans Cranial Applications. Cut to a title card reading "NOW..." with an Aryan-looking Michael, his hot girlfriend and a freckly ginga couple heading to said deserted island on a ferry skippered by *Braindead's* chubby Ian Watkin. The diminutive Michael has nothing but revenge on his bleached-blond mind as he seeks to settle the score with Howell and his growing army of zombie psychos. Several of these goons are graced with irrefutably punk features and attire; from their spiky heads to their half-shredded combat boots.

There's a good case for *Death Warmed Up* being more seminal to kiwi genre fans than Peter Jackson's *Bad Taste* in that it was truly New Zealand's first film to heavily borrow exploitation elements (Kevin Chisnell's groundbreaking effects work) from the international horror scene and package them up with enough antipodean flavors to inspire a generation of movie-mad islanders. Blyth's reckless direction showcases his penchant for fetishism (Hurst budgie smuggling and shower scenes) and enthusiasm for anarchy (Jonathan Hardy's completely inappropriate blackface cameo) in a briskly paced tale that fuses themes from *Dr. Moreau* and Amicus pics before covering them with a punk giallo veneer. The film was shot in 16mm, blown up to 35mm and labeled "a depraved waste of taxpayers' money" by those wishing to take the New Zealand Film Commission down a peg or two. Blyth left NZ to more accepting climes in the U.S. and Canada, where he was attached to a couple of major horror sequels (*Elm St, House*) that ended badly. In a strange aside, before he made *Death Warmed Up*, Blyth met with legendary director Alejandro Jodorowsky, who did his tarot and instructed the troubled Blyth to return home immediately and make a movie. He promptly did so and, in a spooky turn of events, took the film to the Sitges festival where it was awarded Best Film from a certain Mr. Jodorowsky. Believe it or not. (*ANT*)

DEATH WISH 2

Dir. Michael Winner / 1982

Architect/freelance lawmaker Paul Kersey
is back to settle the score.

Nothing in this worthless world ever mattered more than Charles Bronson. As an icon of male aggression, he will never be equaled, and the *Death Wish* series is destined to remain his most enduring mark on cinema. It's with great pleasure that I report that no less than three of the five *Death Wish* films feature punks, beginning here with the follow-up to director Winner's 1974 masterpiece.

Though helmed eight years after the original, *DW2* manages to revive a great deal of the former entry's intensity. After relocating from the scum pit of New York to the scum pit of Los Angeles, Paul Kersey (Bronson) has shed his vigilante pursuits in an effort to rebuild his relationship with his nigh-catatonic daughter Carol (Robin Sherwood). This plan is derailed when their home is invaded by a ragtag gang of rape-crazy sleazoids (including Laurence Fishburne) who stoop so low as to fatally attack the housekeeper. The Kerseys return just in time for a severe beating, and Carol is kidnapped. Back at the gang's hideout—which is decorated with "GERMS" and "PUNKS NOT DEAD" graffiti—she opts for suicide rather than playing concubine for the manimals. His suppressed fury renewed, Kersey adopts a street urchin alter ego and prowls the greasier corners of LA in search of delicious vengeance. Some new-wavey prostitutes give him the once-over from shadowed alleys. Later, a Pioneer Chicken parking lot is bursting with a bounty of misfit punks sporting leather jackets, neon dye jobs, stage blood-smeared lips and even one fearless innovator with bikini briefs outside his pants!

Naturally, Kersey tracks and eradicates the wrongdoers one by one, leading to this incredible interaction with a whimpering, kneeling wrongdoer fumbling with a crucifix necklace:

> BRONSON: You believe in Jesus?
> RAPIST: ...Yes...y-yes sir, I do...
> BRONSON: You're gonna meet him.
> (Bang.)

The fearless equalizer is aided in his quest by unlikely crime-fighting colleague Police Detective Frank Ochoa (Vincent Gardenia), who'd hunted him in the previous film. Bronson's real-life spouse Jill Ireland appears as his romantic interest, just as she had in a dozen films before this. *DW2* features some of the more solid '80s Bronson action sequences and a teeth-clenchingly rotten music score from career crumbum Jimmy Page. (*ZC*)

DEATH WISH 3

Dir. Michael Winner / 1985

Bronson returns with a heavier infusion of hyperactive violence.

Paul Kersey isn't back in New York for a full five minutes before stumbling across a ruthless gang killing. He's senselessly charged for the murder and ends up in an overcrowded holding tank with local junior crime kingpin Manny Fraker (Gavin O'Herlihy), a hotheaded maniac with a reverse mohawk. The cops make a surprise deal with Kersey, releasing him to take on NYC's gang scourge. The criminal crew in question is composed of leather-bound *Warriors* castoffs with uniform facepaint and an iron grasp on the streets. Kersey dives face first into the fray, assaulting the cartoonish hoods without a moment's hesitation. The film takes an unexpected, un-*Death Wish*-y turn when the local tenement residents rally together behind Kersey to help even the odds. Where the first two films explored lone-wolf vigilantism, *DW3* has an entire neighborhood taking on the criminal threat.

Initially slapped with an X rating due to its nearly 50 onscreen homicides, the film was far from a favorite for its star. Though it was their fifth feature together, Bronson's disdain for the project led to him never working with director Winner again. So yes, it's quite possibly the most boneheaded entry in the series, but it's still worth the price of a rental if just to hear retirement-age international character actor Martin Balsam say the F word. Feminists take note: all female members of the gang are ineffective, pastel-poofed mickey-mouse toughs in zebra-print streetwear. The boiling police chief is played by Ed Lauter, who appeared opposite Bronson as an aggressive, gay fur trapper in the underrated *Death Hunt*. (*ZC*)

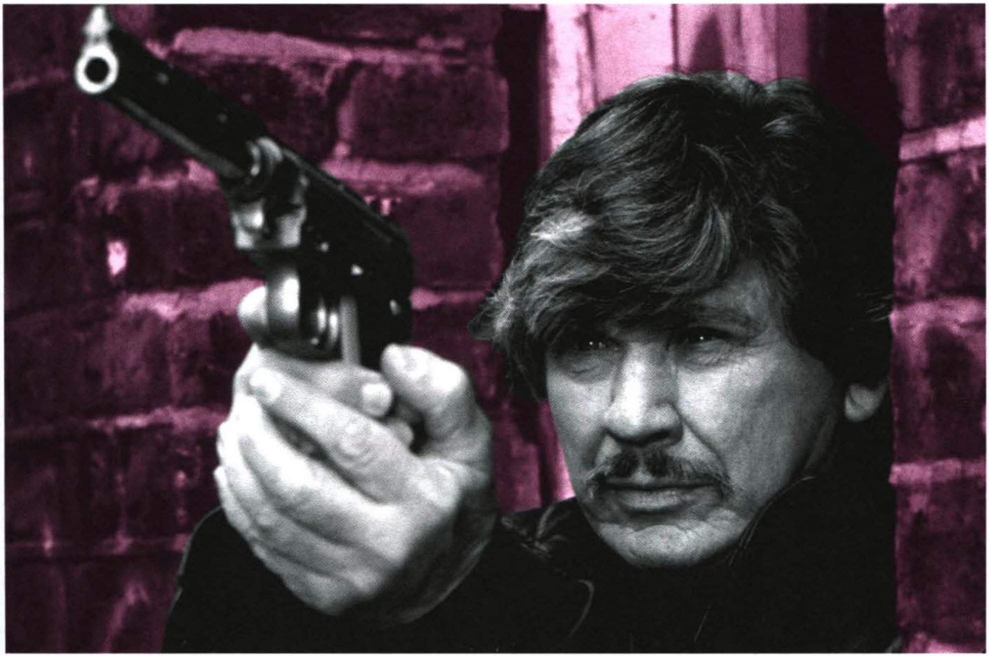
DEATH WISH 4: THE CRACKDOWN

Dir. J. Lee Thompson / 1987

Having killed every criminal on Earth,
America's favorite vigilante starts killing drugs.

Before we begin, let's follow the geographic path of Charles Bronson's seemingly immortal Paul Kersey character: New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, New York again and now, for his fourth (but not final) adventure, back to LA. For a man with such a strong aversion to crime, he seems to make poor decisions when choosing a neighborhood. It's like a critically obese man renting a room above a pizza buffet. But poor judgment be damned, Kersey is digging his heels into sunny California, determined to settle down and live the suburban dream. And after all those years of bitter struggle, what could possibly go wrong?

For starters, his fiancée's daughter overdoses on cocaine provided by teen hoods. In the blink of an eye, Kersey once more drops into the vortex of lawless retribution. He tracks the suppliers to their video arcade hangout, where one of the pushers chats up a chiseled punk with an anti-gravitational jet-black mohawk. Kersey



dispatches the lowlife in his standard efficient fashion. At the crime scene, the only witness is a bleached teddy boy with makeup, shredded clothes and a prominent neck tattoo. Kersey is covertly hired by industrialist Nathan White (the brilliant John Ryan) to wipe out the Los Angeles drug market single-handedly. We're made aware that our hero is up against formidable enemies when he trails a Mafioso cargo van with a bumper sticker that reads "I LOVE NEW WAVE."

What follows is less explosive than the three previous *Death Wish* films, but it's still a very entertaining entry. We're spared the audiotrash Jimmy Page score, exchanged for a soundtrack that ambushes us with severe sex jazz at inappropriate moments. It's strange to see the established *DW* standard adapted to high crime-tackling rather than street thug ventilation, but the irresponsible violence and Bronson's ever-reliable performance keep things crucial, as does the action-packed, neon-lit roller rink finale. (*ZC*)

DEBT BEGINS AT 20

Dir. Stephonie Beroes / 1980

Bored Pittsburgh kids make bored "music for the '80s"
and keep on keepin' on.

I HATE ALL THESE GEEKS

Filmed in dour, totally appropriate black-and-white (much like that *other* paean to the Pittsburgh existence, *Night Of The Living Dead*), *Debt Begins At 20* is a completely charming and accurate portrait of how artistically-inclined punk and synth enthusiasts in smaller regional scenes made the screechy, caterwauling tuneless tunes we've grown to fetishize. And why did they do it? Because they were bored out of their minds.

Beroes' fractured narrative scatters us across three different axes: the everyday boredom of Bill Bored, the slightly cute, slightly dopey drummer for The Cardboards; his courtship and subsequent heavy petting of Sesame Spinelli, one of the singers for feminist banshees The Dykes; and a casual investigation into the meaning of life provided by scene kids who quiz each other with pre-written questionnaires at a loft party (at which both The Cardboards and The Dykes play a show). Along the way, we're treated to a few musical moments by a third band that's also the most talented of the bunch—The Shakes—who explode in a tense display of squiggly power-pop chops.

The scenes depicting kids being snotty with each other, along with those of Bill and Sesame's young love, are fun to watch, but we've seen their kind before. By far the most fascinating and revealing section of the film comes first, when we're thrust headlong into the sleepy mundanities of Bill's meek, quiet life spent in an apartment cluttered with junk and walls splayed with punk rock graffiti. In this segment, we voyeuristically examine Bill scribbling in a notebook; standing at the bathroom mirror while attending to what might have been a self-given ear piercing; standing in the kitchen opening a watery can of some blurry unidentified bean or vegetable; venturing out to the local record shop to trade in worthless used vinyl; and wandering around his neighborhood, a zone which could very easily pass for an equally anonymous urban stretch of Poland. This kid's life is going nowhere, and you really do feel for him, but you also see how he's somewhat content in this limbo, so in the end it's not all that tragic.

A familiar, grim, industrial Northeastern touch covers both the physical and emotional landscape of the film—one of the same root causes behind the Akron, OH formation of Devo some years prior—but our hero does his best with what he's got. Indeed, Bill's band The Cardboards—a mixture of B-52's kitsch and squelchy minimal synth—deal in subject matter typical of nerdy, angular early '80s groups: radioactive fallout, telephone operators, the evening news. But, unlike Devo who had a higher calling as wry satirists, The Cardboards made music strictly for their own amusement, out of sheer frustration with the rest of how their humdrum lives were playing out. Through Beroes' sweetly staged quasi-documentary interludes, Bill emerges as the perfect poster child for optimism in the nuclear age. (*BB*)

THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

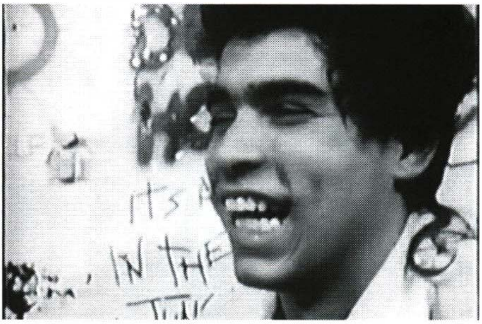
Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1980

The ultimate chronicle of the LA punk movement
and its followers.

Back when punk still had an undiluted standard, Spheeris went to work getting her LA community of miscreants noticed. As the first real document of the growing U.S. punk scene, *TDOWC* aimed to expose all the filth and violence that came with it. None of the tongue-in-cheek over-excessiveness that is seen in the second film (*The Decline of Western Civilization Part 2: The Metal Years*) is felt here. Nor is it as drag-through-the-gutter depressing as the third installment, which largely follows the lives of drug-addicted crust punks. *Decline* instead plays out fairly positively, with awe and respect for the bands represented. Most of the groups and groupies seem to be in high spirits.

Well, we'll get to Darby Crash later...

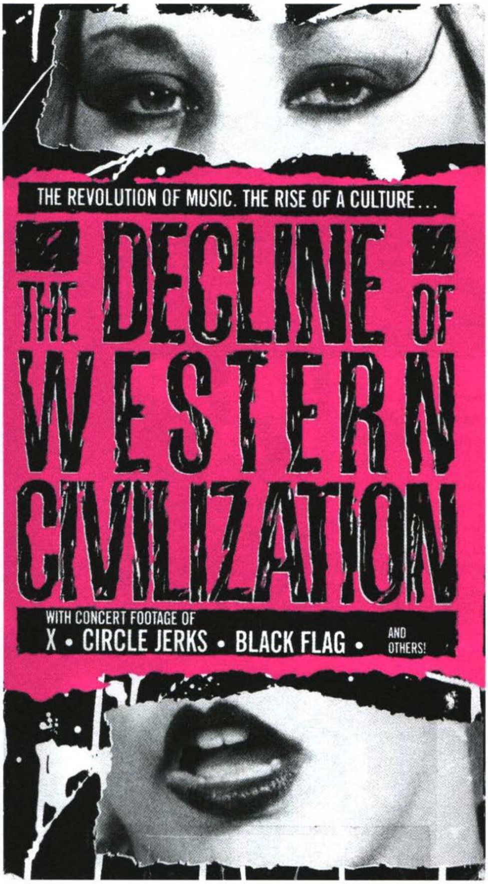
The bulk of the documentary is live footage from gigs set up by the filmmakers, offering two-to-five songs per band. Lyrics are



included on the screen for your next couchside karaoke beer bender. Talking head-style interviews are spliced throughout the movie, and show you just how young and green both fans and musicians of the time were.

As for the bands included, some went on to major success (X, Circle Jerks, Fear, and Black Flag); others crashed and burned with infamy (Germs); and some disappeared before enjoying the notoriety that the movie would bring (Alice Bag, Catholic Discipline). This is not a completist's journey through punk rock in Hollywood circa 1979, but a look into the lives of the people Spheeris knew and the bands they happened to comprise.

Black Flag kicks it off with some early pre-Hank songs. Members Chavo (Ron Reyes, his real name onscreen) and Greg Ginn talk about being banned from virtually every club in town. Interviews take place in an old abandoned church that doubled as a practice space and flophouse. We see the closets the boys lived out of and hear about them getting rich gals to buy them food. Chuck Dukowski insists he's "searching...," and somehow that explains his mohawk to anyone wondering.


THE REVOLUTION OF MUSIC. THE RISE OF A CULTURE...
THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION
WITH CONCERT FOOTAGE OF
X • CIRCLE JERKS • BLACK FLAG • AND OTHERS!

The Germs scrape it together enough to pull off a tune or two before Darby Crash wanders off searching for "a bea-ahr." Crash is zonked out of his mind while performing, mostly falling to the stage and letting folks write on him with magic markers. A trainwreck it may be, but it's still entertaining to read along with his lyrics and see if he's close at all to hitting them. Nope. Crash is later shown on a much more sober day cooking eggs, discussing injuries, dead house painters and microphone etiquette. Their manager Nicole Panter is interviewed, and it wasn't long after this that she quit. It's been mentioned that Darby Crash was pretty unimpressed with his performance in the film. He died months after its release.

X is up next and comes across pro-gear on stage compared to earlier acts. Billy Zoom is all smiles and rock-a-doodle-do. John Doe sweats energy. Exene gives the film crew a tour of her bric-a-brac collection. Security discusses crowd control and how to tell if "pogo" dancing is getting out of hand. Chokeholds are evidently okay as long as the one on the receiving end is enjoying it. Billy hangs out, seemingly irritated during interviews as John Doe gives out prison tattoos.

Some time is spent at the *Slash Magazine* office and on the antics of Claude "Kickboy Face" Bessey. Chris D. of the Flesh Eaters is shown working, but sadly there is no interview. Kickboy's band Catholic Discipline plays a gig and the hate mail is read aloud. Shame there's no real studio recordings of this band. Lead guitarist Phranc is now a folksinger and one of the top Tupperware® sellers in the country. Punk as fuck.

Circle Jerks take the stage for an all-out attack with the crowd violence escalating. Singer Keith Morris clutches his beer to his side like life support. Black-and-white footage of the fans and punks being interviewed (about RAGE!) are intercut with the songs. The band plays "Wasted," a staple to The Jerks and The Flag since Morris spent time in both.

No interviews with Alice Bag, but the band tears through a couple of tunes to a very apathetic audience until the second song goes into "300 heartbeats per minute noise rock" (as Brendan Mullen called it earlier). Apeshit kids do apeshit things.

The movie wraps on a high note: Fear and crew rile the crowd up by stalling and throwing around verbal abuse until a small riot breaks out. Band members are attacked. Show-goers get hit. Singer Lee Ving punches a woman. She swung first. Ving, an opera-trained vocalist (and great character actor to boot) belts out hits like "Beef Baloney" and "I Love Living in the City" to the frenzied audience. All this brings back memories of their appearance on Saturday Night Live (thanks to John Belushi). Tight as all get out, Fear plays the movie out through the credits. My favorite crowd heckle—"Eat my fuck!"—is later used as dialogue in Spheeris' film *The Boys Next Door*.

Most of the bands had broken up, regrouped and/or died by the time the film's video release finally pushed it into the spotlight. Many other punkumentaries sprung up in its wake, such as *Another State of Mind* and *The Slog Movie*, and early efforts like *D.O.A.* and *Rude Boy* started playing the late night TV circuit. But *Decline* remains the grand high master of them all, long since out of print and highly sought after in the bootleg market. *(RF)*

THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION PART III

Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1998

Nearly two decades later, Spheeris returns to the scene of the original Decline to investigate punk's mutations.

A group of barely post-adolescent hardcore kids wait outside a show, discussing where they were when the first *Decline* was released: "I was a sperm in my father's testicle." "I was an abortion that couldn't get paid for." They mock popular faux-punk acts like The Offspring, feign disinterest in Spheeris' questions and—at their best—reignite the same spirit seen in her '80 masterpiece. Where that film largely focused on the era's musical output, this update explores the personal lives of the following generation of hardcore fans; mainly the gutterpunk set who are given respectful coverage here for the first time in documentary history.

Punk fashion has intensified in the interim, with foot-long liberty spikes and visibly absent hygiene a new standard both on and off stage. Bands playing include Final Conflict, Litmus Green, The Resistance and hardcore fixtures Naked Aggression, while the kids at the shows have even more striking names: Pinwheel, Filth, Why-Me and—my personal favorite—wiseass panhandler Hamburger. Whether morose or sarcastic, all of them agree that society is fucked beyond repair. Even the Circle Jerks' Keith Morris revisits the *Decline* series to concur that the state of things is even worse than when punk started.

A number of those interviewed avoid hard drug use, though most admit to drinking the moment they wake up each day. Several left their families due to physical abuse, most are homeless and a lucky fraction pack themselves a dozen deep into a party-demolished studio apartment. The tight quarters seem even less livable when one of the boarders confesses to not having bathed in a month-and-a-half. Too many of them assume that they'll be dead within five years, a prediction that's tragically accurate for three of the film's most likeable subjects.

But even in capturing squalor and self-destruction, Spheeris' documentary is never hopeless. One teen cheerfully explains how he became part of the crust scene: "I did it because no one likes me anyway...because I'm a fuckin' nerd."

Another has "TACO BELL" tattooed across her knuckles. No future. *(ZC)*

PENELOPE SPHEERIS

Director – *THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION; SUBURBIA ('84); DUDES*

DAM: How did you come into a career as a filmmaker, and what eventually led to you shooting the first *Decline* documentary?

PS: I started working at Denny's when I was 16, or actually 15...I lied about my age. Then I went to work at IHOP as a waitress and I was able to put myself through film school at UCLA. When I was just graduating, a friend called me up and said, "How about we make a music video?" and I didn't even know what that was at the time. It was like 1970 and there was no MTV or anything. So I decided to start shooting some music videos and I formed a company called Rock N Reel which I think was the first music video company here in Los Angeles. I shot a huge number of bands and had a blast doing it and I learned a lot about filmmaking. I learned some in school, but I really picked up a lot when I was actually doing those music videos. Years later, people would ask me, "Why did you cut your *Decline* movies like MTV videos?" It was hilarious because actually I shot *The Decline* a few years before MTV began. So, I don't know, maybe they cut their videos like I cut *Decline*. Who knows.

Were you welcomed by the bands and their fans, or was there skepticism or territorialism about someone documenting their scene?

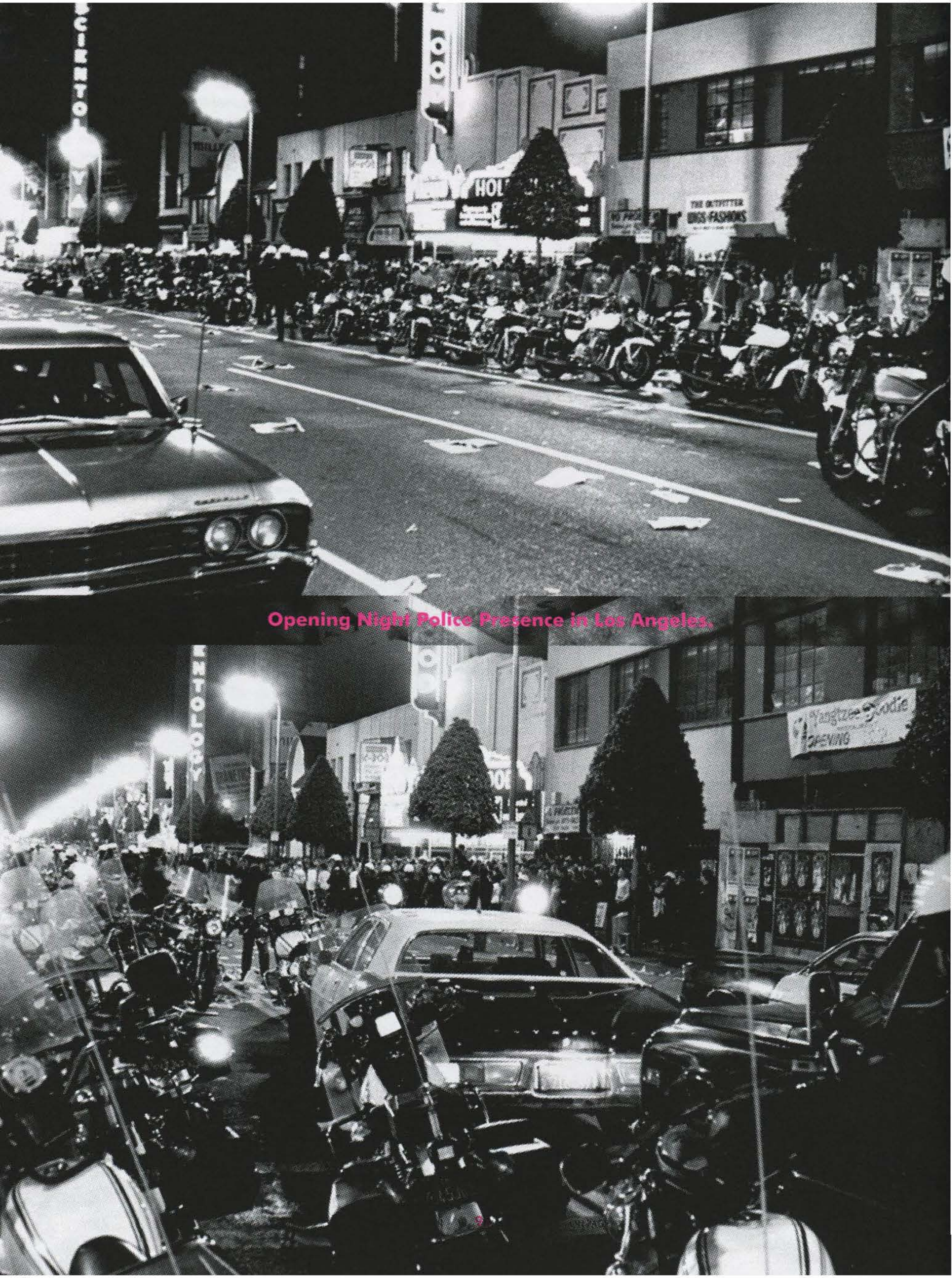
I was welcomed by the bands because I knew all of the ones I was shooting. They were friends. I was around the scene and went to all the clubs and decided that I needed to document the scene because it was something that was so forceful and energetic and I'd never seen anything like that before so I knew it was historically important. The bands welcomed me, definitely. I mean, there were a couple of bands that didn't want to do it. One of them, for example, was The Go-Go's which I was actually glad about because later they just turned into such a bubblegum pop band that I think they would have discredited the film had they been in it. But when they started out, they were a little rougher. Plus they were cool because they were all chicks, you know?

Do you feel that you were able to completely capture all the aspects of the LA punk movement that inspired you to make the film in the first place?

Well, I did my best. You know, you never completely capture anything. It's such a complex and fleeting scenario. I mean, I think I did it the best I could and my only regret is that I wish I would have had a few more bands in it like the Screamers and The Weirdos. If you look at the bands that are in *The Decline*, those bands went down in history and are known to this day. A lot of the incredible, groundbreaking bands back in that day should be remembered too, but I wasn't able to film them all. If I would have been able to shoot others, they could have had this historic importance as well.

It's assumed that *The Decline* was the direct inspiration for *Suburbia*. Were you already planning on *Suburbia* before *Decline* was complete?

After I did *The Decline*, I really had a hard time getting it into theaters because they just didn't play feature-length documentaries in theaters in those days. I took it to the Mann chain and asked them if they would at least give us one midnight screening so I could prove that the movie had an audience, and they said no because they didn't believe it had an audience. So I booked some dinky theater on Hollywood Blvd. and they gave us one midnight screening and there were so many people that came that they had to close down the street. There were 300 motorcycle cops there. I mean, it was like a riot. So, I guess it proved that people did want to see the movie. I got a letter from the Chief of Police Daryl Gates, and he asked me not to show the film anymore in Los Angeles. But, of course, I showed it anyway. Then after that, I couldn't get a theater because the owners thought their theaters would get trashed if we showed the film. I mean, there wasn't really much damage that happened except one usher got his jacket stuffed down a toilet. So, I don't know what the problem was. The reason I wrote *Suburbia* was because I was still so fascinated with the punk rock lifestyle that I wrote a narrative piece because I figured then I'd be able to get it into theaters. I was lucky enough to hook up with a guy that just came in from Cleveland. He was a furniture salesman and had a chain all through the Midwest. His name was Bert Dragin. He said he would pay half if I could get the other half


SCIENTO
NTOLOGY
HOLLY
THE OUTFITTER
MOD FASHIONS
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OPENING

Opening Night Police Presence in Los Angeles.

GIVE ME YOUR BODY

of the money. So, I brought the script and a quarter of a million dollars to Roger Corman and he put in the other quarter of a million—which, back in the day, $500,000 was a pretty good chunk of change for a low-budget movie. So that's how *Suburbia* came about and I wasn't planning *Suburbia* before *The Decline* was completed because the only reason I wrote *Suburbia* was so that I could keep making movies about punks. The only way I knew how to do that was to write the narrative piece.

How was *Suburbia* cast? It seems like a genuinely close-knit group. Have you maintained contact with any of the kids from the film?

Suburbia was a big question when we were casting because, you know, Roger and the company and the other producer really thought I should use real actors for the parts of the punk kids. But, in my mind, it was easier to turn punks into actors than actors into punks. I hear from Chris Pedersen, who played Jack, every once in a while. And Flea was in *The Decline: Part III*, as you may know, and Christina Beck and Maggie I talk to quite a bit. I wish I knew where that kid Skinner was.

Was there much interference from the production group, or were you mainly able to tell the story the way you wanted to?

Roger Corman does B movies, so he kind of always pushed it toward being that, where I wanted it to be more of a culturally significant study of a certain sociological group, this new breed called "punks." You know, Roger made biker movies and exploitation movies and that sort of thing, so luckily he wanted to do the movie because he felt this might be the new wave. But, you know, he didn't really interfere too much. It was mostly that he wanted me to have that scene up front where the kid gets nuked by the dog. Most of the stories that I wrote and filmed were based in real life. I mean, there was a pack of dogs that were guard dogs that were released by a company that went out of business and they were wandering around down there. There were those abandoned houses obviously, that looked like the end of the world. They made people move out because a freeway was going to come through and I don't think it ever did. There was a kid, after he had a drug overdose, whose body was placed in the front seat of his mother's car and that's where she found him. So, you know, the kids in my movies are a little more polite. They brought her body home in a more honorable way. I mean, basically I was able to tell the story that I wanted to and I thank Roger Corman and Bert Dragin for making it possible for me to do it.

What was the youth/punk reaction to *Decline* and *Suburbia*, and how did it compare to the critical and general public's reactions? Any stories from premieres or screenings?

The reaction to *The Decline* and *Suburbia* was off-the-charts positive. *The Decline* was the most written about movie of that year. I got requests from all of the studios to see the movie and it caused a big media storm. Then *Suburbia* was extremely well-received as well and won some awards, such as one from the Chicago International Film Festival. Both of the films were received incredibly well, both critically and by the public. People always think I must have gotten rich off of *The Decline* movies, but because it was impossible to distribute documentaries theatrically, I actually didn't make anything from it. It's OK though, because it put me on the charts as a director and for that, I'm very grateful. The one story that comes to mind was when I first showed *The Decline* at the Writers Guild Theater just to get some audience reaction and the very first person who stood up was this older woman and she said, "How dare you glorify these filthy heathens!" I felt so bad because I was so proud of the film and I felt like, "Damn, did I make a mistake by doing this?" And here we are, years later, and they show the films in museums and universities and other educational institutions all around the world. So, I guess I didn't make a mistake by doing those movies.

***Dudes* was the first punk action/western, and you reunited with Flea and Lee Ving for the film. How did this project come to you, what changes did you make?**

This project came to me through a producer friend of mine, Miguel Tejada-Flores: the project was written by Randal Johnson, who wrote *The Doors*, and I didn't really make a lot of changes. I did add a lot of punk music whenever I could.

***Dudes* took you out of LA for the first time as a director. Any general difficulties/anecdotes about the production?**

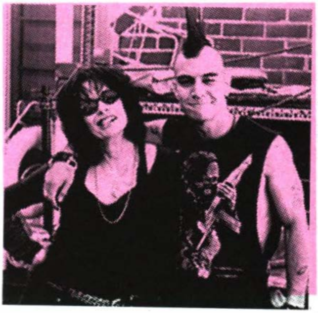
When we arrived in Arizona to film *Dudes*, I remember looking around at the landscape thinking, "Oh, my God. We are going to kick Arizona's ass." And I couldn't have been more wrong. I think Mother Nature must have heard me because Arizona kicked our ass. Every calamity imaginable happened on that show. I mean, think of any weather associated with chaos that you can, and it happened: everything except an earthquake. There were dust storms to the degree that we couldn't shoot or breathe. There were rains to the point that we were flooded with the trucks stuck in a field for a couple of days. There was snow. There was heat that was ungodly: I mean, horny toads were dying. There were tarantulas crawling in your bed at night. *Dudes* kicked my ass, but was worth it. I wish more people could have seen it. They haven't even put it out on DVD yet. Bastards.

You've said *Decline III* started off as a return to the LA punk music scene and shifted to a strong chronicle of homeless youth. It's also your favorite of the three films. What did the creation of this one put you through?

There was one night when I was filming *The Decline: Part III* after I got home from shooting, and I laid in my bed and thought, "OK, this is such a depressing and horrible thing to integrate into my psyche." Because I had to think about kids, teenagers, being out on the street, homeless, with no roof over their heads and nothing to eat. I mean, we always think about third world countries as having homeless kids on the streets, but we don't really expect it here. I think that really hit me after I filmed that scene in Darius' apartment, where all the kids were there. Darius was the only punk that had an apartment, so all the kids would hang out at his house. I didn't really know the film was going to be about squatters and gutterpunks. I thought it was just going to be about the new punk rock music. I mean, they all looked exactly the same as before. The safety pins were in exactly the same place and the chains were in exactly the same place and so were the patches. So, I was thinking it was just going to be some fun music I was dealing with. It turned out to be a really difficult thing because I had no idea it was going to be so heavy, where these kids are just out on the street with no one to take care of them except each other. I do truly love punks.

***The Decline: Part III* wasn't distributed as widely as the other two, but it was critically praised. Was it able to draw enough attention to make an impact on the problems shown in the film, even locally?**

It was shown at Sundance and some other festivals and it was highly praised just like the other films were. The reason it wasn't distributed was because the only offers I got to distribute it would include me giving up the rights to the other two films, and I refused to do that. That's why it hasn't been distributed. I'm working on the DVDs now, so hopefully the three of them will come out some time before I'm dead. If not, please, somebody do it after I'm dead.



KEITH MORRIS

Vocalist – CIRCLE JERKS; BLACK FLAG
Self – *THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION; REPO MAN; ANOTHER STATE OF MIND; THE SLOG MOVIE*

DAM: Tell me how you ended up in *Decline*.

KM: I'd known Penelope Spheeris because she'd gone out with Bob Biggs, who started Slash Records. I had friends who worked there, and were in the bands on the label. I'd met her through Chris D. of The Flesh Eaters and Claude Bessey, who were main writers for *Slash Magazine*. We were all friends. At one point in LA, you'd pay three or four bucks and see X with the Avengers and The Dils and The Bags. She was part of all that.

I had already quit Black Flag. I was in the Circle Jerks by the time she started filming. She said, "Keith, I really want to film Black Flag with you." I went to Greg Ginn and he just laughed in my face. She filmed them anyway, of course, and Ron Reyes had replaced me. I knew the answer I was going to get, but she was a friend so I had to ask.

So she ended up filming the Circle Jerks. The show that she filmed was at The Fleetwood down in Redondo Beach. It was gonna be a big show with bands coming from everywhere. We were the only South Bay band on the bill. All the kids showed up and it was completely nuts. I booked all the bands, and that particular night was The Bags, Fear...and there were other bands that she filmed that didn't end up in the documentary, The Gun Club, The Urinals and The Gears.

Did it seem unlikely that someone would be making a full scale 35mm film about the LA punk scene?

You have to understand that we didn't take any of this seriously. We were just a happy-go-lucky group of guys that were glad to be doing what we were doing. We just wanted to have fun and say Fuck It to everything else. We didn't think about anything like that. We were gonna play whether she was filming or not.

I just meant...did it seem strange that someone else *would* be taking what you were doing seriously?

Well, we'd seen other stuff like this. There was that Don Letts film *The Punk Rock Movie* with The Clash...I mean god, we'd even seen *Woodstock*. We weren't questioning anything. We were gonna be there, there were gonna be a bunch of bands that we liked playing with, there were gonna be a bunch of great people there. We were going to drink and get drugs and hang out in the parking lot and smoke cigarettes and tell jokes!

No one was intimidated by the camera?

That documentary was REAL...you can put an exclamation point behind the "L." The only posturing that might have been going on would have been the kids that she was interviewing. Like, "I wanna kill the police. I'm gonna get a gun and blow their brains out." Or "I hate hippies." I mean I knew all of those people that were interviewed, and that kill-the-hippies shit was just regular jargon. Most of these people wouldn't know a hippie if they were standing next to one. For years, you heard "Get a haircut," but what does fashion have to do with any of it?

Penelope did us a really huge, Grand Canyon-sized favor by filming us. It got to people in other places that wouldn't have heard about these bands. I mean, maybe they would have heard a song on the radio or read a paragraph about one of these bands somewhere. But *Decline* afforded us the opportunity to get in a van and go to other places. We had no Internet, we had no record label that could place big ads in magazines and get us on the radio. We were playing it by ear. "Here's the key

to the van. Load it up and leave." There was no strategy, no marketing guy telling us to go shake hands in the coffee shop, or go to a record store opening in a mall and eat hot dogs with kids in Oklahoma. There was none of that for us. We weren't that fortunate.

Then you had that great anti-religious rant in *Another State of Mind*. How did you end up in that movie?

Those were all bands that we played with: the Stern brothers from Youth Brigade and BYO, Minor Threat...Ian MacKaye has been a really good friend since the first time I met him up in San Francisco. He and Henry Rollins were on some kind of boyhood journey to get out to see the world, and they happened to be in San Francisco when the Circle Jerks played at Mabuhay Gardens. At that time, we had Tony Alva's skate team following us around from show to show. They all came up there and they were stage diving and slamming. All of that started out here with the skaters and surfers.

So as far as *Another State of Mind*, I knew all of those guys, Social Distortion, even the roadie. So they asked me to participate in their film. And of course would do it, because...I'm a rock star and I need as much attention as much as I can possibly get. I need my ego stroked as often as possible.

And then came the lounge bit in *Repo Man*.

Sure. We're goofballs. When we were asked by Alex Cox to participate in *Repo Man*, we'd never been in that situation before. And we were taken out of our element. We'd never done anything like that. But the only bummer about it was that they dressed us in these tuxedos at noon, and it was incredibly hot out. We had to keep them on. We were given this little trailer, and it had no sink, no air conditioning. That particularly day was probably 98 or 99 degrees.

Here's a bit of punk rock trivia. We had Earl Liberty playing bass; we had Chuck Biscuits playing drums. He'd been in D.O.A., Black Flag, Fear....We had quite possibly the greatest drummer in punk with us. That song we did for the movie just had both of them and Greg Hetson playing acoustic guitar. We played with a drum track. And that was the only song we ever recorded with one of our best lineups. In our band family tree, we've probably had at least a hundred members. Here we are with these incredible musicians...and we do an acoustic song with a drum machine.

EXENE CERVENKA

Vocalist – X; Self – *THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION; X: THE UNHEARD MUSIC*

EC: I think there were films that depicted aspects of what was going on at the time, but nobody could get the whole thing. It'd be so difficult to do that with a documentary. The complicated factions of a person just usually aren't shown that much. They end up being about one aspect of the scene, and how shocking it is. There was a lot going on between people, a lot of art, and someone like Claude Bessey who was so smart and so astute just didn't manage to come off that way in the film. It's hard...people uncover great things in documentaries all the time. But when the viewer's intimately aware of the subject of a film like that, it's more difficult for the documentary to have an effect.

We were already out of the local scene by then. We'd gotten to where we were a national touring act. People saw the movie, but it didn't seem to change things for us.

I'd moved to Los Angeles in 1976. There were still people coming back from Vietnam. It's changed so much since then: of course it can't ever be the same. It used to be that you could find a place to just create and be completely isolated from the rest of the world. And that can lead to you making some pretty amazing stuff. Now people are attempting to replicate what everyone else does in order to be famous.

Originality is everything in my opinion. The reason punk itself was so amazing was because it was just totally original, created by these original people. So the next amazing thing will also have to be created by a totally original group of people that have no predecessors, without any stepping-off point from some other art or genre. But I don't know when that's going to happen. It may take place now and then in little ways, but as far as a major movement like the beatniks or punk rock or rap or something like that, I don't see a sign of another thing like that coming.

PHILO CRAMER

Guitarist – FEAR; Self – *THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION;*
"Jews Band Member" – *GET CRAZY;* "Punk Guitarist" – *AMERICAN POP*

DAM: What first drew you to punk, and how did you become a part of it?

PC: Certainly not the music. At the time, there was this "progressive" rock stuff going around. It was like real smart. It got so fucking smart that it went around the great circle and came out sounding really stupid. The Ramones, Pistols and eventually Devo changed all that. The Ramones and the Pistols showed attitude was more important than the music. Devo proved that doing everything wrong can be so right, too bad they got that "nerd band" rep. When I joined Fear, this guy Lee Ving with the purple hair had a bunch of songs that were no more than four chords each and real fast. I thought to myself, "You can't do stuff this simple." Then it came to me that in the simplicity lies a kind of elegance. The limitations seemed huge, but like playing a chess game, you need limitations or otherwise the game's no fun. One song, "Waiting for the Gas," was only one chord.

Do you feel that *The Decline of Western Civilization* offered a good representation of what was going on in LA at the time?

For me it did. When I watched it the first time it was like seeing everyone I hung out with, except for Darby. I never liked that guy, but when I watch it nowadays I feel sympathetic towards his plight.

Did the film's release impact the band or you personally in any way?

One time, I went to the supermarket, and this employee comes up to me and says, "Are you Philo Cramer?" I was pretty tough to live with for the next two weeks.

You were also in *Get Crazy*, the most chaotic rock movie of all time. How did you get involved there, and how did you end up as part of the Jews Band?

Lee got the part of the homicidal punker. They also needed a tall Jewish kid for the Jews band. My girlfriend at the time was Jewish, so he told them "I got just the guy."

There are so many kids going nuts throughout that entire movie, and some of whom look like genuine punks. Was the mayhem in that film simulated or at least somewhat real?

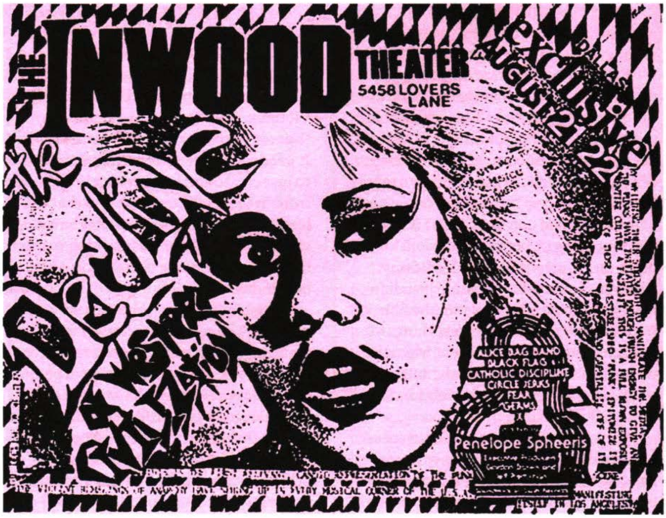
The spirit during the filming of those scenes was more of containment. "We want you guys to act like punks" was quickly replaced with "Not so crazy!" There were a lot of locals in those scenes, and they were the McCoy.

Is it true that you wrote the song "Johnny are You Queer" that Josie Cotton sang in *Valley Girl*?

Me and the legendary John Clancy wrote the song. It was called "Fetch Me One More Beer." There was this duo around Warner Bros. known as the Paine Brothers who took the song from me, changed the lyrics, and got Josie Cotton to do it. They offered me 50% of the proceeds, which I accepted, but then they reduced it to 33%. In my stupidity, I thought that these guys couldn't be trusted if they change their terms at will, so I told them I didn't accept the terms and would fight them later. I didn't realize that the lyrics hold the real genius of that tune...that's genius as in it's catchy and sellable, not genius as in it's smart. Anyway: I contacted some school buddies I knew that had law degrees, and they told me don't bother, I'd lost. They said I should just go fuck myself now.

Why haven't you done more film work?

That's like asking why I haven't purchased more Ferraris or accepted more Grammys. LOOK AT ME!



ALICE BAG

Vocalist – THE BAGS; Self – *THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION*

AB: We were approached to participate in the filming by Penelope. She drove out to The Wilshire Fine Arts Studios, a place with low hourly rates where many punk bands rehearsed. We sat on the dirty carpet with her during a break and she told us about the film. At the time I didn't think it would be anything other than a student film. Penelope and Craig Lee discussed money a little bit. Penelope didn't make any big promises; in fact, she told us we probably wouldn't make that much and handed us her standard contract to review.

The Decline captured a moment. I doubt if everyone would agree it was THE moment. It captured West Coast hardcore in its infancy. I don't know if it was ever Penelope's intention to try to capture or depict the early Hollywood scene. I think she would have realized that she was much too late for that. The evolution of a music scene is incredibly quick and *The Decline* captured a brief moment in that evolution.

I think we get into trouble when we expect artists to do what we want them to do. Penelope had her own vision for the film and she selected the bands and individuals that best helped her achieve that vision. I'm sure she has critics who feel the film should have been something else and I understand those feelings because at first, I expected something else too. The movie revealed some of the self-destructive aspects of the scene that I didn't particularly want to see on the big screen.

Attending the premiere was a little like looking in a mirror and not being happy with the reflection. In fact it was so hard for me to see the film that I didn't watch it again for about 30 years. It took me a longtime to accept the film for what it is instead of for what it's not. On a personal level it was not my (nor our band's) finest hour, in fact we broke up shortly after the filming. Neither did the film portray the early Hollywood punk scene at its kooky, creative best. What it did show was the direction in which punk was moving at that time—1979—and it gave many people all over the country their first taste of California punk.

DECODER

Dir. Muscho / 1982

A loosely knit cautionary sci-fi experiment.

William S. Burroughs and Einstürzende Neubauten's F.M. Einheit appear in this German industrial-Orwellian paranoia fairytale. Television and muzak combine to exercise absolute control over the future's citizens, all of them grinning emptily while wolfing down processed meals from H-Burger. Remaining free-thinkers barricade themselves in their homes, having given up all hope. Government slaves work themselves to death beneath the streets, one of whom is Throbbing Gristle's Genesis P-Orridge as a Worker's Party-type raging against recorded media. An enterprising young man (Einheit) manages to manipulate technology to bring some variety into the darkness. Eventually, small groups of malcontents begin to break loose and cause some much-needed public disturbances, often by placing subversive electronic noise cassettes in public stereos. The power of the discordant tapes F.M. creates is enough to drive consumers into a terrified frenzy and rioting (albeit mainly in stock footage). His closest ally is the frog-obsessed Christiana, played with emotionless grace by Christiane Felscherinow, who was the inspiration for the legendary cinematic soul-crusher *Christiane F.* The movie also features William Rice, who had appeared in works by almost every major New York independent filmmaker from Beth & Scott B. to Richard Kern. Soundtrack largely provided by Einstürzende Neubauten and The The. (*ZC*)

DEF-CON 4

Dirs. Paul Donovan & Digby Cook / 1985

The unfunny side of atomic devastation.

An orbiting nuclear defense pod holds three military personnel who are left floating above an irradiated Earth after World War III. As all signs of life blink to a halt, the trio is pulled back to the surface by an equipment malfunction. The planet's population has dwindled to scant pockets of rabid cannibals and fascist survivalists. Among the latter group is a baby-faced soldier with chains, spikes and a convenient receding hairline mohawk. The militant leader is a powermad pretty boy who delights in public hangings and general torture. He takes particular pleasure in goading chubby misanthrope Vinnie, played brilliantly by Maury Chaykin. This respected and extremely gifted character actor is wizzed on by an albino near the film's climax. (*ZC*)

DEGENERATION PUNK

Dir. Claude Santiago / 1997

A French documentary that uses existing footage to chronologically sketch the international impact of punk's formative years.

The chronicle begins in England, where Generation X do "Your Generation," followed by a particularly aggressive performance by The Slits. Familiar shots of the Sex Pistols playing "Anarchy in the UK" are followed with a vintage news story on the emergence of bands like The Clash and The Vibrators. The Stranglers knock out their perfect "No More Heroes," Johnny Rotten explains why The Rolling Stones are useless and the Pistols' infamous Bill Grundy talk show gaffe is revisited. Moving into '77, the focus shifts to New York, where Richard Hell and the Voidoids entertain a demure crowd with "Blank Generation." A young Lydia Lunch throws used tampons at the Dead Boys on stage, and the same "used rags" are later pulled from frontman Stiv Bators' pockets. Back in London, Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood explain how their chic punk clothing boutique remains in line with individuality and rebellion. X-Ray Spex set off a claustrophobic room with "Oh Bondage, Up Yours," and The Clash calmly antagonize the president of the English Labor Council during a TV forum. 1978 starts off with Suicide's "Ghost Rider" playing over a beautiful montage of international show flyers and zine art. Sham 69 and The Damned are represented, as is the coverage of Sid Vicious' murder arrest. By 1979, several punk participants are declaring the movement dead, and Vicious' passing is used as a heavy punctuation mark. Despite that last bit of arguable tastelessness, the piecemeal documentary flows fairly well, mining strong moments and effective patches from sources such as *Punk in London*, *D.O.A.*, *Punking Out* and Jarman's *Jubilee*. (*ZC*)

DELTA FORCE 2: THE COLOMBIAN CONNECTION

Dir. Aaron Norris / 1990

After elbowing three punk diners in the teeth, Chuck Norris travels to South America to single-handedly dethrone a bloodthirsty drug lord.

That about covers the film, as well as several dozen like it. The tactless trio is played by healthless, young skeezers with oily skin and calculated shave jobs. After they call Norris' favorite restaurant proprietor "Charlie Chan," they find themselves on the business end of some short, furry, red-haired limbs. The greater threat comes in the form of cocaine czar Ramon Cota, played by reptilian everyvillain Billy Drago at his most unblinkingly vile. One character explains how Cota spent his afternoon with a female Colombian villager: "Ramon killed her husband, murdered her sick baby, used the baby's body to smuggle cocaine and then he raped her." (*ZC*)

DEMONS

Dir. Lamberto Bava / 1985

A late-night theater becomes a breeding ground for fearsome, projectile-vomiting, flesh-ripping beasts.

Demons begins with some good old-fashioned juxtaposition; on one side of a subway car we see Cheryl, a clean-cut co-ed cradling her textbooks, and on the other side we see an assemblage of sinister, multi-colored hairdos. Even though they look like monsters, the Euro-punkers who inspire Cheryl's doe-eyed fear are not the titular demons, but just a minor blight. When the train arrives at her stop, she's silently greeted by a cloaked figure with a half-metal face (filmmaker Michele Soavi) who is giving out movie passes for The Metropol Theater.

Undeterred by the blank marquee, quite a few people show up along with Cheryl and her friend, filing in past the imposing, red-headed ticket taker. As the movie-in-the-movie begins, its plot begins to mirror what's happening in the audience: some dummy puts on an ancient mask that scratches his face and this minor abrasion transforms from a pulsating skin bubble to a gooey explosion. Out comes a glowing-eyed, pointy-toothed demonoid. It seems that demonic possession is not unlike unprotected sex: there's a pulsating sore that bursts, then you maul someone until your sore oozes into their ravaged body part and presto! A new demon person.

While this is happening inside The Metropol, the subway punks (naturally led by a guy named Ripper) have been busy terrorizing the streets in a stolen Toyota wagon, along with a jailbait punk hooker who snorts cocaine out of a soda can. They pull over by the theater to handle some narcotics business and cops show up. When their efforts to smooth-talk the fuzz crumble, Ripper screams, "All pigs suck!" and off they run into the creature-infested fray.

Demons contains every component of an Italian terror classic, which shouldn't come as a surprise due to the involvement of writer/producer Dario Argento and director Lamberto Bava, son of legendary horror director Mario Bava. Considering his lineage, Lamberto's chosen profession put him at risk of working in more of a total eclipse than just a normal man-sized shadow, even with Argento's help. (*JH*)

DEMONS 2

Dir. Lamberto Bava / 1986

The demon contagion tears through an apartment building in the heart of Rome.

Though this film picks up following the events in part one (and is again co-scripted by Dario Argento), no one seems concerned about the recent supernatural outbreak. Instead, the denizens of a nearby high rise go about their regular birthday parties, sexual escapades and pregnant yoga. But when a televised demon hunt inexplicably brings the creatures into the residents' living rooms, all hell breaks loose...again.

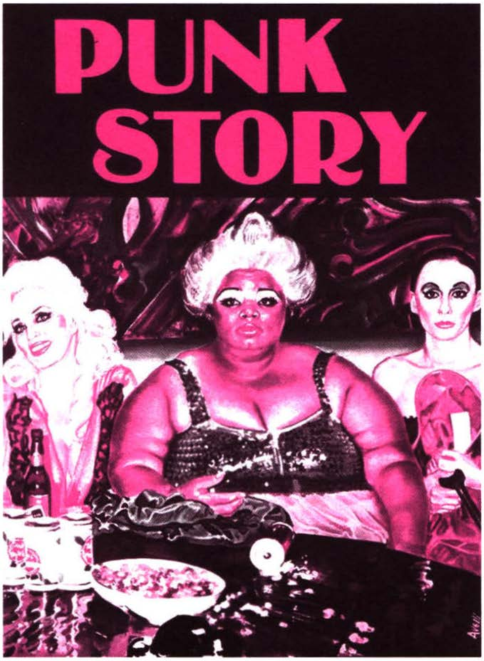
Contamination takes place following any puncture from a demon's fang or claw, and the beasts secrete a noxious acidic blood that seeps through the very structure, infecting the entire building. As everyone panics, mutates and/or dies, a carload of scumbags tools the streets, among them a snarling punk girl. These characters promise to reappear at a crucial moment but never do, leaving the viewer to assume they were obligatorily included just to meet the previous film's negligible punk street cred. But back to the true stars; these beasts exist under a whole new set of rules from their last outing, birthing *Gremlins*-esque monstrosities at will and unleashing new murder methods at every turn. They're also surprisingly spastic; leaping fearlessly through burning wreckage and flinging themselves down stairwells. One can only assume that several demonically possessed green-skinned stuntmen spent weeks in traction. (*ZC*)

DESPERATE LIVING

aka PUNK STORY

Dir. John Waters / 1977

Hysterical housewife Peggy Gravel loses her marbles and ends up in a shantytown of misfit freaks.



Desperate Living is another cinematic clothesline for John Waters to hang his goofball moral degeneracy and ridiculous filth on for all the world to see. Waters practically invented dirty laundry; he is uncompromising in his vision of putrescence. Acting, character development and plot are negligible, even irrelevant in Waters' world. His celluloid is a delivery system for the almighty gross-out gag.

The opening of *Desperate Living* is one long overhead shot of a fancy table setting, which eventually becomes home to a plate of roasted rat, served on top of a bed of lettuce. This certainly sets the tone for the onslaught of grime and reprehensible behavior that transpires, and also serves as a succinct visual representation of Waters' overarching message: the bourgeoisie always prove themselves to be just as (if not more) grotesque than your average scumbag.

As the film begins, Peggy Gravel (Mink Stole) has just arrived home from the sanitarium. When some neighborhood kids fire a baseball through her window, her brain breaks and she's screamin' demons, spewing vile hatred on anyone that crosses her path; in fact, she even shrieks, "I hate the supreme court!" Peggy is the quintessential unhinged suburban ghoul. When her husband (George Stover) tries to sedate her, she really loses it and enlists the help of her massive nurse, Grizelda (Jean Hill), who subsequently sits on her husband's face and suffocates him. The two ladies go on the lam and are pointed in the direction of slimy safe haven Mortville by a cross-dressing pervert cop.

This is where the film really hits its sleazy stride, as Mortville is populated with society's rejects and malcontents. This new Gomorrah is an unending black hole of moral decay, so naturally there're bound to be some punks hanging around. Peggy and Grizelda's landlady, butch lesbian Mole McHenry (Susan Lowe), has a safety pin in her face, a greaser 'do and dresses like a carnival barker. We also get some glimpses of rocker/biker dudes who have punk flair, with new wave sunglasses and lots of leather jackets (the police force in Mortville consists entirely of leather daddies). When a fight breaks out in Mortville's S&M lesbian bar, two ladies enter the fray, one with lots of chains around her neck, the other with chopped hair and a sleeveless T-shirt on the brink of disintegration. Made in 1976, released in '77, this film is a primary research source for punks to take their fashion cues from: the gay community, the biker community, and the gay biker community. It was even released as "*Punk Story*" in Italy.

Peggy Gravel refuses to let go of her upper-class roots, and is constantly disgusted by the congregation of hideous scum she walks among every day. She eventually joins up with fascist monarch Queen Carlotta (Edith Massey), who rules Mortville with a flabby fist. The perceptive viewer will come to see that the manipulative behavior and entitled decadence of Peggy and Carlotta is what's truly reprehensible, superseding any of the "disgusting" behavior of the citizens of Mortville, who just want to have a good time, live free and happy, and root around in their harmless filth.

Desperate Living is a cavalcade of bad taste. A babysitter has her face shoved into a bowl of dog food and chokes to death. A recently transplanted penis is cut off with household scissors. Breasts and "unnatural sex" are everywhere. Depending on the individual viewer, this film is either pure entertainment or merely one monocle-cracking, wig-spinning scene after another. In this sense, Waters may be critic-proof, as his films present themselves so baldly, with no lofty aspirations of canonization or any sort of broad appeal, that you either like them or you don't. Regardless, the fearless director leaves good taste smoldering at his feet. (*SC*)

DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS

Dir. Dave Markey / 1984

Three teenage girls face the evil forces of the music industry.

Twenty-year-old Markey and cohorts Jennifer & Jordan Schwartz were (and still are) an undeniable driving force in the LA punk scene, working overtime as both entertainers and fans in every medium. Their *We Got Power* magazine was an accessible, perfectly handmade account of the movement, and spawned three compilation LPs featuring nearly every notable Southern California punk band. But as the scene changed, so did their style of documenting it. Markey had chronicled the sheer force of local bands' performances in 1982's *The Slog Movie*, and knew his way around a Super 8 camera well enough to embark on a more ambitious project. After brainstorming with the Schwartzes, it was decided *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* (then called *Desperate Teenage Runaways*) would be his first narrative feature. The legendary McDonald Brothers band Redd Kross became involved via a *We Got Power* article titled "The Punk Rock

Partridge Family," and they immediately landed roles in the film. Production took place mostly on weekends, but tenacity triumphed and the hour-long epic eventually reached completion.

The story itself was a funhouse mirror reflection of the rags-to-riches and rise-and-fall stories happening across the ever-devolving LA punk landscape. Kitty Carryall (Jennifer Schwartz) and her best friend Bunny Tremelo (Hilary Rubens) comb the city to complete the lineup for their band The Lovedolls. Their drug-addled pal Alexandria (Kim Pilkington) is so inspired that she escapes a mental institution to join their ranks. One scene featuring her shooting up crystal meth in a trashed washroom is the real deal, a bold artistic move, but one which the filmmakers later regretted including. Kitty's mom (played by Jordan Schwartz in parental drag) pursues her wayward daughter into the back alleys of Hollywood, and ends up beaten to death by a gang of longhairs, including the soon-to-be final Lovedolls recruit, drummer Patch Kelly (Janet Housden). Their initial meeting is one of the movie's many highlights:

"Thanks for killing my mom."

"No problem."

The girls sleep in abandoned buildings, practice their songs on stolen equipment, and run afoul of Venice Beach punk gang The She-Devils. It's not long before they're discovered by rock promoter Johnny Tramaine (Steve McDonald), who says, "I think I can do for you girls what God did for mankind." He steals Bunny away to his ultramodern condo, where she learns the price of rock 'n' roll fame. Meanwhile, The She-Devils declare war on Kitty and company. On the run from the gang and hungry for vengeance against their manager, The Lovedolls still manage to find themselves with a #1 single and a dream contract from Capitol Records. They celebrate their success by sharing a foot-long doob with Tramaine, and then spike his wine with a hard-line hallucinogenic. An amazing drug freak-out follows, with the corrupt promoter transcending the ninth dimension while staring at a *Yentl* poster. More tragedies strike, and The Lovedolls inevitably join the casualties of rock as the sun sets on yet another chapter of punk history.

The cast is a who's who of '80s LA backyard filmmaking, several of them also appearing in *Suburbia* and Raymond Pettibon's video features. The soundtrack was recorded largely by Redd Kross and friends, but also featured songs from The Bags, White Flag, the Nip Drivers and Markey's own hardcore band Sin 34.

Kids at record stores and shows started murmuring about an imminent punk feature from the *We Got Power* crew. Finally, the film was given a modest premiere. To everyone's surprise, legendary music producer/wingnut Kim Fowley arrived. According to Markey, Fowley was gripping a briefcase he said was filled with explosives, and stated the film's story was stolen from his actual life as creator of all-girl supergroup The Runaways. His bodyguard was a large black woman in full jungle garb, actually clutching a long spear. Markey agreed to keep "Runaways" out of the title, and Fowley and his associate left the venue, detonation-free. The audience (largely composed of friends and family) responded well to the screening. *The LA Weekly* started the press ball rolling, and the buzz became a genuine demand resulting in packed showings throughout the city. With a video release that actually made it onto the shelves of major rental chains, *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* eventually reached its rightful place as a no-budget punk masterpiece. (ZC)

DAVE MARKEY

Director – DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS; LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR; THE SLOG MOVIE; REALITY 86'D

DAM: At the time you made *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, it seems you had a soft spot for the juvenile delinquent films: so which of those are your favorites?

DM: You know, I hadn't really seen too many of the '50s JD films. To me, the *Lovedolls* films were more the outcome of watching bad television movies or trash TV for years. I see what you're saying but I don't know...I haven't seen very many of those films. I was more inspired by bad TV and '60s psychedelic stuff.

You mean more like the *Sarah T: Portrait of a Teenage Alcoholic* type movie?

Yes! Or *Born Innocent*. Of course, that was how I became friends with Jeff and Steven from Redd Kross. We had a collection of this stuff. Getting videotapes in the '80s was really difficult and it was really something to get ahold of a copy of one of these things like *Dawn: Portrait of a Teenage Runaway*, which is actually included in a scene in *Lovedolls*. That really had a lot to do with what was going on with the story.

At what point did you decide to make a full-length feature?

I started out making short films. Actually, the first film I made was 15 to 20 minutes long and required editing and splicing...a pretty ambitious project for an 11-year-old. There's no typical fashion with which people get involved with filmmaking. They'll start out with shorts and work up to features but I just sort or went back and forth. It just depended on the project and what it called for. A lot of the shorts we conceived and shot in a day and I did in-camera editing on some of them.

What about the actors on the film? Any specific stories and did you work from a script or was dialogue sort of improvised?

There was no shooting script for the first film, and there was somewhat of a script for the second. The first film, there was some dialogue, of course...the whole thing wasn't improvised. I think we sort of had a rough idea of scenes and we just started shooting them and went from there. It was interesting when we shot. If we were in a public location, if anyone was there at the time, they ended up being in the frame or we sometimes ended up giving them lines. It's interesting how everything really relied on whichever environment the scene was set in. It was half pseudo-documentation and half playtime.

Being the time period that it was, were there any drug problems on set?

Sadly, the girl who shoots speed in the first film, Kim Pilkington, died recently. A lot of people went through their drug phrase and snapped out of it, but she never did. She continued for 25-plus years of hard drug use and it caught up with her. We fell out of touch many years ago, but still, way back then we were really close and she played a major part in the *We Got Power* magazine and an important role in the *Lovedolls* films.

How old were the McDonald Brothers during the making of the movies? Because I've heard anywhere from 15 to 18.

Well, Steven was 15 when he did the Johnny Tramaine character. Once in a while, you get adults playing kids, like a 30-year-old will play a 15-year-old...that's pretty much normally how it is. He was so incredible in that character. You go back and look at it now and he is way beyond his years. Jeff was about 17 or a few years older. We started shooting in 1983...Jeff is about a year older than me...so he was probably 19, but Steven was 15. Everyone else was in their mid-teens.

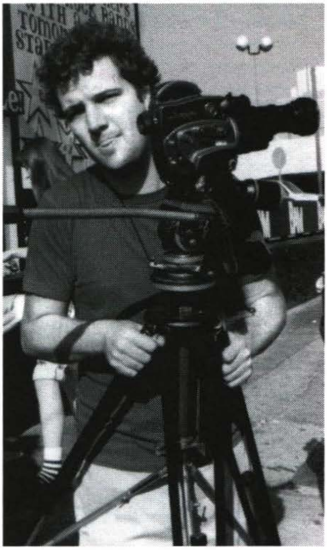
Did the soundtrack come together during production or at the end?

It came together after the film. During, we used the original versions of the song like The Sweet's "Fox on the Run," which was replaced when it was released on videotape, because of clearance and rights, by the Nip Drivers version. I sort of had bands do versions of songs in the film and got Redd Kross and Bill Bartell from White Flag to do Runaways-esque songs to replace the actual Runaways songs that were there.

When the film was done, there was no concept of release or distribution or any sort of typical rights and clearances and stuff. All of that was eschewed for the instantaneous element that made the film. It's interesting how that sort of influenced what became the center to the film after the initial screenings. The original had The Cramps in it and so many others. The very first version of the film was pretty amazing, but we clearly had to redo it for legalities, and then that became the final product. In a way, you can say there are different versions of the movie. For example, *The Brady Bunch* theme and incidental music, which was taped with a tape recorder off a television set. That's what's in the film...a tape recording of a broadcast.

So how did you hook up the first screening?

I don't remember exactly, but I did a lot of those bookings myself. I would just contact clubs and try to get people interested. I think it stemmed from me calling this guy Jean-Pierre at The Lassa



Club and arranging a screening. It sold out, which caught him by surprise. He ended up giving us a week there. It was in a small theater that sat about 75 people and that week-long engagement sold out every night, then it got booked for a third run. That's pretty much how it got started. It was all very surprising, it sort of got filmic legitimacy through this run even though there was only one Super 8 print of the film, and that's what I showed.

The way I saw it was on video, which I rented from Blockbuster, of all places. Tell me how you hooked up that deal.

That was the oddest thing about the film: that Blockbuster ended up buying about a couple thousand copies to fill up their cult section. That had more to do with the distributor of the video at the time, which was a tiny distributor in Hollywood across from Hollywood High School: it was run out of the back of a video store by this guy who named himself Larry Fine after one of the Three Stooges. This guy was a real joker...but I mean he was responsible for getting that videotape out, and of course Blockbuster were the biggest buyers of it. It was just odd that they chose that. I don't know why or how, it didn't make any sense then, but it's funny that that's where you saw the film. What other movies did they have?

I believe they had you in the middle of the female JD section with *She Devils on Wheels* and *Faster Pussycat*.

They must have had someone working for them at the time who was pushing for that. It was probably one guy's doing. Maybe Blockbuster just started out as more cool. I don't know...it was just dumb luck.

Do you think the hardcore punk scene culture of the '80s made the making, marketing and selling of the film easier?

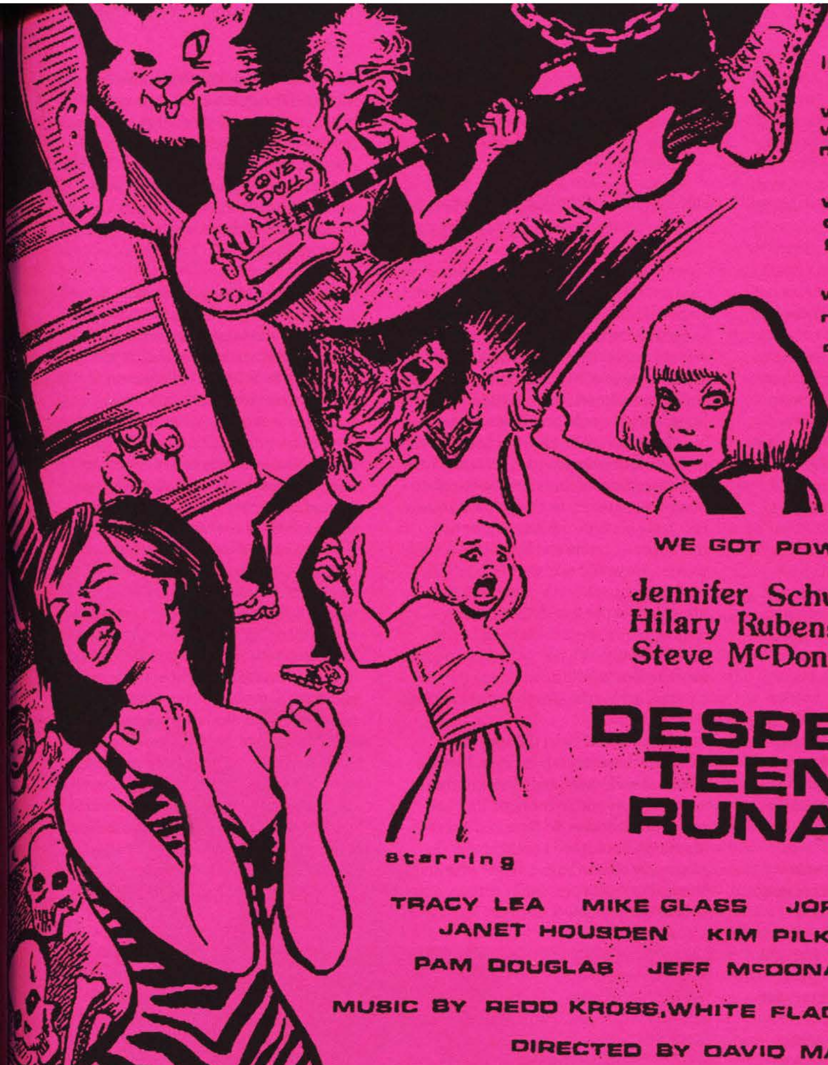
It certainly gave it an audience. I didn't even think the hardcore punk kids would take to it because to me it was something other than that. It was almost at that time when I made *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, for me, a turning away from the hardcore thing I was involved with the two years previous. Of course, the soundtrack we put out had a lot of these bands on it so that was still enough to relate it to that theme. I thought it was like something totally different, but throughout time, that has sort of gone away.

Since the re-release, have there been any problems with the bands that did songs for the soundtrack?

There was a problem with Black Flag. The only problem I encountered and it was with someone I personally worked with and did a total of a dozen recorded releases with, Greg Ginn and SST Records. He had a Black Flag song in the first *Lovedolls* film and it was on the soundtrack and in the video for 20 years. When it came time for the DVD release he contacted my distributor and threatened a lawsuit after several thousand DVDs had been printed up, all of which had to be destroyed. It's funny that the problem I had with the film was with a former friend and associate, someone that I was involved with on various projects, and he never paid me for any of that, so I thought he wouldn't mind. The problem was there was no real paperwork with the film. It was all done on a handshake. That was the only problem I had and considering all of the other areas that are gray, I think I got lucky.

What is the reaction of viewers outside the U.S. to the *Lovedolls* films?

I do a lot of film festivals, but usually I'm not there. I recently got to go to the UK and Buenos Aires. I always worry about the reaction, especially in places I've never been before, like South America. How the hell are they going to understand these pop culture references from the '70s and '80s ...these things that you really don't think would translate. To my surprise, I sat in on several screenings in Buenos Aires and people got it and were howling with it in a way I hadn't seen. I mean they really got it. I think there's a lot of American television down there. When I got back to my hotel one night, *Wonder Woman* was on, so I'm thinking this sort of American sensibility is all over the world. I think people that grew up with this, who had this sort of conditioning to this sort of culture; I think those are the people who usually respond to the film. The UK audiences are different. Their sense of humor is a lot less...they tend to look at things very seriously, very astutely, like it's art. To me, it's just a funny film.



in a scene of no values

where climbing your
way to the top
means climbing into bed

where drugs and
cheap thrills
fills the date book

where rock 'n roll
means
death 'n destruction

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JENNIFER SCHWARTZ

Writer / "Kitty Carryall" – *DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS; LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR*

DAM: When and how did *We Got Power* magazine get its start?

JS: My brother Jordan and I became friends with Dave Markey before we even discovered punk rock. It was in '78 or '79 that we moved about a block away from him. We'd see him around, and we used to hang out at this skate shop called Rip City Skates, which is actually still there. He'd come in and we'd wonder who that guy is. The guy who owned the shop said, "That's Dave Markey. Stay away from him. He's the type of guy that's gonna wind up on top of that AAA building across the street with a machine gun." Of course we got to know him, and we've been best friends for 30 years [laughs]...and he's never killed anybody. Not yet. But at that time, I still thought that "My Sharona" by The Knack was punk rock. There were a couple record stores in the neighborhood, and we eventually got turned on to new wave through The B-52s, then we went through ska, and then Jordan bought a Black Flag album and it was all over.

We Got Power magazine came up in about 1980. We'd been going to punk rock shows and my brother had a camera. Before we knew Dave, he'd done this homemade community paper where he'd write about whatever the kids on Harvard Ave. were doing or whatever. So that all sort of segued into this punk rock fanzine. Dave would send away for promo copies and get into gigs. Bands would come to town...we took Hüsker Dü to the beach the first time they toured to LA. We were sort of these Welcome-to-Los-Angeles punk rock community hosts. We'd show 'em around, hang out, go to the gigs...it was cool. So the magazine would have the Misfits, Hüsker Dü, Black Flag and all the bands from around here, Necros and all the bands from out of town. It was still such a small scene that you could have access to anybody.

And it was Dave that started things in the direction of movies...

Dave was quite the little entrepreneur. Even before the age of 16, he'd done the magazine and already made films. There was one called *The Omenous*, which was kind of a take on *The Omen* and *Carrie* and comprised of just kids from the neighborhood. People would get killed and vomit blood...all the stuff a 14-year-old kid would make a movie about in 1978, y'know. There was a transvestite character too [laughs]. Maybe that's when we should have known that Dave is a little off. Anyway, he had this Super 8 camera and he'd made actual movies. He would take the film, cut it in his bedroom, splice it by hand and screen his movies at the Jewish Community Center or on a sheet in his backyard at night. So it wasn't a far cry for him to make another film, but I'll never forget the way we came across the idea to do the *Lovedolls* movies.

I loved Red Kross. I thought they were just the greatest band ever. I was obsessed with them, and I thought they were so funny and so cool that they just had to be in movies. So Dave and I were at his mom's house, and I decided that the goal was for me to be in a movie with Red Kross. That's all I personally really wanted to do. That was how it started. I had a little bit of money, and Dave had none. The Super 8 film came in these little tiny rolls in like coffee tins, and each one was about ten or 15 bucks. I had a job, so I said, "I'll pay for the film, you can make the movie and here's what it's gonna be about." He was the director and the visionary...I was just ponying up the money so I could hang out with Red Kross.

How did you get them to do it?

Oh, I knew them already. We were all friends, and would hang out at Oki Dog and stuff, so they just said, "Cool, sure. We'll be in a film." Everyone was allowed to make up their own part. Hilary Rubens was in the movie first. She was my best friend at the time and she was in it. Janet Housden was in Red Cross then so of course she'd be in it. Whoever was around and would show up made the cut. It seemed like it took forever to shoot but I was 17, so it was probably just a year or a year-and-a-half. We'd film on the weekends and most of it was filmed at my mom's house when she wasn't home. You need a lot of light when you're filming—especially with Super 8—so we'd take the lampshades off every light in the house and drag them all into one room. We'd take most of her clothes and wigs and everything, have the whole house decorated, and then we'd hear that garage door open and it was "Oh fuck!" We'd have to run and put it all back before she realized it. We'd shoot a lot outside because there was better light, but then the cops would come along and ask for a permit. Again, this was the early '80s, so kids just didn't do stuff like this.

Did that type of thing happen often?

Not as much as you'd think. There was one scene where Steve McDonald's character Johnny Tramaine gets dosed with acid and he kills himself. That was actually in Westwood Village, which was a huge place for people to go to on a Saturday night to just walk around. We made a dummy and dragged it to the top of this building in the middle of Westwood and threw it off the building. Dave would film people screaming, thinking it was real. But we never got arrested. I guess it was just different times. We filmed in abandoned buildings on Hollywood Blvd. and never got into trouble. You couldn't get away with that now.

It became a semi-sensation when it was finally done, right? How did that build up?

To promote the premiere, Dave and I just went around and put up posters. It was very traditionally punk rock. We certainly didn't have a publicist [laughs]. But our friends were in it, and those friends would tell their friends. The best way to get people to come see your movie was to put 'em in it. Dave knew that from back in the neighborhood days. That's as far as our plan went. I had no idea how Kim Fowley found out about the premiere, but that was when the movie was still called "Desperate Teenage Runaways." Maybe he saw a flyer, thought it was about The Runaways, or just heard that it was about an all-girl band. I don't know how he knew about it, or how he found my number and started calling me. He called and threatened me, saying he was going to sue me, he was going to kill me, that he had trained Doberman pinschers that were going to attack me. This was all going to happen at the premiere. I was terrified...I thought we were going to be sued or murdered.

I think the first screening went well. I remember that Pat Smear was there and he was being an asshole. It was a video screening and he kept pulling the plug out of the big, old three-light video projector. I didn't know him yet so I thought he was just a total prick but he was just trying to be funny. It was fine. Everyone there was either in the movie or knew someone that was, so we thought it was a fuckin' riot. It was made for a group of friends to show to a group of friends, and that was it. So when it came time to do the second one, suddenly everyone wanted to be in it or help do the lights or whatever.

DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN

Dir. Susan Seidelman / 1985

A plethora of misunderstandings leads to even more misunderstandings, punk fashion and Madonna.

Desperately Seeking Susan tells the ancient tale of the hopelessly romantic wallflower who dreams of a rich life beyond her cloistered suburban cage. Enter the one-woman franchise that is Madonna. She plays Susan, the tough-talking, callous, manipulative free spirit. The world has not known a flesh and blood corporate entity that towers like Madonna. Can we watch her without thinking, "Hey, that's Madonna"? Regardless, the movie remains likeable and entertaining, and refreshingly light on the pop star before its third act, in which the plot becomes a hard-edged facsimile of a *Three's Company* episode starring New York hipsters.

The film is glorious to look at as the punk/new wave contingent on display is literally dizzying. Even the villain is hip in this film; he looks like Batman's nemesis The Joker if the supervillain played bass for The Specials. Susan's boyfriend plays in what I assume is a new wave band (we never actually hear them) that traverses the country in a van emblazoned with rows of yellow skulls. And, during one particular street scene, the number of punk extras may leave you rolling around on the floor in ecstatic overload.

There's a bald cyclops—eyepatch covering his right eye—wearing what looks like a '50s prison uniform, i.e. pure denim. Blink and you'll miss the individual sporting a green mohawk with a complementary green zebra-print shirt. As you stare, mouth agape, you may overlook the sleeveless vest pierced with buttons, inhabited by a spiky-haired white male punker. And finally, what looks to be Travis Bickle and his soulmate, wearing matching fingerless gloves. Wipe the foam from your mouth and try to view the rest of the movie without breaking into a stage dive.

Really, the film is a postcard from the 1980s New York City freak scene, and does not shy away from showing the dregs and weirdos stalking the streets and clubs of the city. It's also bursting with turns by NY character actors and musicians: John Turturro; Victor Argo; Giancarlo Esposito; Richard Edson, who, incidentally, once played drums with Sonic Youth; John Lurie as a neighbor who plays sexy sax; and a cameo by Richard Hell. The plot, involving mistaken identity, amnesia, stolen artifacts and a few other kitchen sinks, is a clothesline for the parade of outcasts. Take the discotheque scene, which is crowded with gawkworthy individuals, and any consideration of plot or character is forgotten. The skunk punk, sauntering across the dance floor with what looks like a beaver pelt stapled to his head, will have you wide-eyed with wonder. Previous to Mr. Skunk, the viewer is treated to a row of New Romantic goth punk thespians, looking like Samuel Taylor Coleridge via The Banshees, dancing limply and generally not giving a shit.

As I watched the film I simply sat in anxious anticipation of the next queer vision of insanity to grace my eyeballs. Will there be someone who'll top the thin mustache and Andy Warhol ape drape wig of the thrift store clerk? Is there really anything on celluloid better than a shirtless Steven Wright? And on and on, as you might imagine. Even with all the machinations stuffed into this film, nothing overpowering happens, but all the actors apply themselves well, and the wardrobes render everything else moot, so any typical romantic comedy inertia is barely noticeable. Consequently, pausing the tape every few minutes to ask questions like "Is Aidan Quinn really wearing thin suspenders over a T-shirt?" will not cause the film to slow. In fact, time will fly. (*SC*)

DESTINY TO ORDER

Dir. Jim Purdy / 1990

A writer's creation springs to life and causes a ruckus.

Like its contemporary, *Cool World*, *Destiny to Order* concerns a creator being sucked into his own fictional world. Also like *Cool World*, it's a major turd. Author J.D. Baird (Stephen Ouimette) churns out hard-edged novels featuring the exploits of bloodthirsty biker Kenrick (Michael Ironside, what did you do to deserve this?). With a twist of contrived bullshit, his word processor pulls Kenrick into reality, along with sexy chanteuse Thalia. J.D. is somehow transformed into a 12-year-old boy in a California Raisins T-shirt and goes on to change into a number of his lousy characters. When he turns into a female prostitute, there's a "hilarious" segment of him pawing at his new genitals and wheezing. Kenrick lords over his new domain, clad in a studded leather jacket with "DESPARADOS OF DOOM" misspelled on the back. He types a command into the computer that makes the suddenly transsexual author perform a rap song about how much he misses having testicles. The best scenes only earn the honor by default, including a devil-locked punk bugging out to light synth pop and a monumentally ugly biker who says the F word eight times in 20 seconds. If you haven't already surmised, this blatantly Canadian mess is agonizingly putrid, and the VHS box cover of Ironside typing devilishly on a Commodore 64 offers a hundred times more entertainment than the tape contained inside. (*ZC*)

DETECTIVE

Dir. Jean-Luc Godard / 1985

Within the Hotel Concorde St. Lazare in Paris, a number of characters intersect through a montage of classic plot scenarios.

Seeing is deceiving in this enigmatic, sometimes baffling and very French film. In other words, it's quintessential Godard. Despite his known fondness for American detective movies, some claim that the respected director made *Detective* as a commercial effort only to raise money toward making *Je vous salue, Marie*. However, Godard dedicated *Detective* to fellow filmmakers John Cassavetes and Clint Eastwood, which could be his way of commiserating with his American contemporaries and suggests that the film was something more than a means to an end.

The film's stock punk is Cyrille, and the only time you really see him or his mohawk is while he's on the computer typing dictation from one of the older boxers. Julie Delpy, in her first feature role, plays his girlfriend. She practices the clarinet, lounges about the hotel room topless, and sometimes does both at the same time. She's out when Cyrille is accidentally shot in the head, and he dies alone. So tragic...so French. (*BI*)

DEVILS, DRAGONS AND VAMPIRES

Dir. Damon Foster / 1999

Ghouls, creeps and monsters are on the loose and it's all settled with a lot of kicking.

When you order a movie from Damon Foster, a VHS tape is delivered to your house in a full-color handmade box. These shot-on-video genre collisions reveal a filmmaker obsessed with '60s horror hosts, the occult, '70s Japanese television, large-breasted women, infantile humor and '80s video effects. The outcome might be silly, but it's deliberate...not to mention the fact that he's made multiple feature-length films and you haven't. Gothic punk band Antiworld is seen performing the title song. Later, they play it again to an audience of slamming punks, go-go dancers and a Shaolin monk doing the twist.

A man wearing a pentagram cowboy hat pours breast milk over his cereal. A lady takes a long shower. Lots of people in crazy costumes get shot. Long, surprisingly well-choreographed martial arts sequences play out in local parks and beaches to ripping soundtracks. The climax involves a stand-up comedy death scene. Two bucks says all the actors are the director's friends. The camerawork and editing are a little rough around the edges, but a lot of sweat goes into this. A hundred times more entertaining than most homemade motion pictures, not to mention a heavy chunk of what's playing at the local theater. The overall outcome is endearing and inspiring. This guy has also made his own Asian film zine and online TV series!!! Next time you find a wallet in the gutter, buy yourself a Damon Foster movie. (*BC*)

DIFFERENT FOR GIRLS

Dir. Richard Spence / 1996

Tormented transsexual loses penis and finds true love.

A lot of people run into old classmates and are shocked by how much they've changed, but Paul Prentice (Rupert Graves) encounters much more than weight gain and bad plastic surgery: his best friend Karl (Steven Mackintosh) is now a demure lady (!) named Kim. Surprisingly, super-macho Paul is completely fascinated by Karl's transformation, but Kim is not so eager to revisit the past and tries to dodge Paul's attempt to rekindle their friendship.

Despite her initial hesitation, Paul's tenacity pays off and Kim agrees to go for coffee. The meeting is an unqualified disaster and Paul's oafish ignorance offends Kim, who storms out of the restaurant. So Paul tries again, this time taking Kim to a Buzzcocks show. Kim stands like a blown-glass mannequin at the rear of the seething, punk masses while Paul spastically bounces and shouts along with "Ever Fallen in Love."

There is an undeniable chemistry between Kim and Paul, but neither one knows what to do about it. Kim fears Paul's loutish antics will ruin a lifetime spent trying to blend in and stay out of trouble. Paul, who is straight, is confused by his attraction to Kim but can't stop himself from seeing her. It's a sweet story, and Paul's genuine desire to understand Kim's transsexualism offsets his numerous gaffes. Unfortunately, the plot goes all *Jerry Springer* and falls apart in the last act, but for the most part the film feels sincere. (*LAF*)

DIRTY LAUNDRY

Dir. William Webb / 1987

The wrong man accidentally picks up a bag of mob money. Wacky antics ensue.

If someone from the future were to show up and ask what the 1980s were all about, this movie would be a good place to start. It has absolutely everything you could want from an '80s comedy. Aerobics dancers boogie in a club. Punks appear sporting devil locks, swastikas, skull skirts and spider dresses. A nerd makes remote-controlled flying condoms. Grannies with machine-guns threaten the lives of the innocent. Carl Lewis shows up in a *Miami Vice* parody and gets manure poured on him while the homeless watch. Sonny Bono knocks out Greg Louganis, then parties with a giant female Dr. Frankenfurter look-alike. Breakdancers appear out of nowhere. A karate school, talking parrots and racism (the main character speaks "Negro-ese" with an old African-American man) bombard the senses. The only problem is that the lead actors are so bland. This film really needs a dose of Eddie Deezen or Curtis "Booger" Armstrong. Despite this fault, it's still incredibly entertaining. Watch for Russ Meyer babe Edy Williams as "Poodle Lady." (*BC*)

DISCO BUMPKINS

Dir. Ricky Chan / 1980

Shaw Studios comedy about a group of friends enchanted by disco.

After an animated opening credits sequence, we're introduced to Travolta-obsessed Hamburger and his pack of friends. They all wear tank tops that read "Macho Man." One of the guys has that age-old problem of having gotten five girls pregnant at once. There's lots of footage of Hong Kong discos, as well as one great scene featuring a baby with a mustache. But despite the farting-on-the-bus segment, the insurance commercial with denim-clad mohawked thugs beating a helpless actor and the car with a swastika on it, this film is an aimless bore. (*BC*)

DISGUSTEEN

Dir. Ben Weasel / 1990

Vampire punks drink beer and swear.

The first and final feature film from Chicago pop-punk juggernaut Ben Weasel, who also wrote, produced and plays a starring role. Production quality is zero and the strangled images look like they were shot on audiotape. Says Weasel in a written history of his career: "I shot an awful movie called *Disgusteen* which was basically worthless..."

No one's likely to argue with that assessment, but this anti-budget headache is not without its distinctly punk charms. The opening segment features teen Elizabeth telling her overtly religious mother that "Jesus is a total dick." Later, Liz and her square boyfriend Steve attend a party that gets crashed by a herd of boisterous shitpunks. One of them declares the gathering to be in need of a cleansing, slashes his wrists and splatters the preps. The lowlifes kidnap Liz and take her back to their squat where their vile leader Clark transforms her into a vampire. Turns out it's not such a rough deal. Elizabeth is renamed Zippy, and spends her time running around with good-natured undead punks and drinking blood from beer bottles. The nocturnal crew passes the daylight hours engaging in dildo duels or watching real-life televangelist Robert Tilton speak in tongues.

Though the plot reaches its apex there, plenty of memorable moments keep the viewer hovering above comatose. A man opens a pizza box, finds the pie inside covered in bloody fingers, and vomits on it. Frank lures a political-activist hippie back to the lair, where the peacenik rants against McDonalds before the gang tears him apart. A private detective is hired to find Liz and gets his weenie bit off. One of the vampire youth has an angry mom who doesn't note his bloodsucking lifestyle, but disapproves of him living among "those welfare cheats, junkies and faggot artists." Things wrap up when homophobic punk-vampire bounty hunter Frank (Weasel) re-kidnaps Liz and the chase is on, leading to the ultimate showdown with punk nightlord Clark.

Soundtrack by several legendary late '80s/early '90s bands including Blatz, Screeching Weasel (of course) and Filth, and the film's titular theme is provided by Chicago's own 8-Bark with Ben Weasel filling in on vocals. (*ZC*)

DISTURBING BEHAVOIR

Dir. David Nutter / 1998

Teenagers are the animals in this take on *The Island of Dr. Moreau.*

Steve Clark (James Marsden) is a newcomer to the island community of Cradle Bay. On his first day at school, Steve walks through the pre-class assemblage on the front lawn as he makes his way to the entrance. Near the front steps, a porcupiney trio of nogoodniks has set up camp: there's a sloppy turquoise mop-top; a Casual Friday leather daddy; and the acoustic guitar-playing twin of Vyvyan from *The Young Ones.* Of course, like any respectable punk, the real Vyvyan would eat that guitar, not play it. Steve soon finds out that outcasts like these are an endangered species.

The school's psychologist, Dr. Caldicott, has designed a program to transform troubled teens into academic and athletic all-stars known as The Blue Ribbons. The parents and laypeople of the community think it's forced team-building retreats that are bringing the kids in line, but really they're being controlled by a microchip implant that has the small side effect of hair-trigger, murderous rage. So, the choice is homicidal honor student or mildly mischievous miscreant; unfortunately, insufferable, embarrassing dialogue is a characteristic of both groups. Even Steve Railsback's power is zapped by this movie's stupidity. (*LAF*)

D.O.A.

Dir. Lech Kowalski / 1980

A verité exploration of punk rock's awkward adolescence, and one of the most important documentaries of the genre.

A scenic array of disinterested, fashionable misfits breeze past the camera; they're some of the self-made outsiders in line for the Sex Pistol's first and last ever Atlanta performance. Inside, the band plows through "Anarchy in the UK." The reaction is mixed; most attendees are appropriately inspired, but one refers to the show as "fucking garbage." A British government official offers a likeminded (if more respectable) take on the band and movement: "I'm not shocked by punk. I'm shamed by it."

X-Ray Spex blare their sax-driven anthems, and Rich Kids (featuring former Pistol Glen Matlock) inject a more rock 'n' roll tempo into the film. Sham 69 frontman Jimmy Pursey unleashes his dissatisfaction with a violent crowd before the band rips into a pair of patented class-battle numbers. Decidedly un-British scumrockers the Dead Boys offer an appearance, the skeletal Stiv Bators making Pursey look obese in comparison. Generation X are another, more accessible contrast to the sometimes-vicious subculture being explored. All footage of the bands is interspersed with segments from the Sex Pistols' ill-fated 1978 U.S. tour, including a stop in Tulsa where a Bible-thumper's raised banner alliteratively contrasts Johnny Rotten against Jesus to prove that punk is indeed an export from the fiery pits. This leads to the Pistols' final American performance, where an entrepreneurial attendee hawks "punk pins" (aka standard safety pins) for a buck apiece.

In the documentary's most notorious and memorable moment, the immodest Nancy Spungen brews coffee to pep up Sid Vicious because he can't stop nodding off long enough for an interview. There's a great deal of footage with the pair of them struggling to stay coherent, recurring until the viewer is jarred with a set of titles showing the dates of their deaths just months later.

Kowalski's most renowned film, *D.O.A.* is more detachedly objective than Wolfgang Büld's similar *Punk in London* or Penelope Spheeris' mighty *Decline of Western Civilization*, but remains relentlessly strong and engaging. Unlike Büld's masterwork, *D.O.A.* establishes a tangible division between the bands and their devotees, especially noticeable where the Sex Pistols are concerned. Vicious is the only member of the band who makes any effort to address the camera, and a sad attempt it is. In all, the group is given star billing but painted as a festering symptom of punk's uprising, destined to implode before their veneer of feral social terrorism could fade with time. (*ZC*)

LECH KOWALSKI

Director – *D.O.A.; GRINGO: STORY OF A JUNKIE; BORN TO LOSE*

DAM: What were you doing as a filmmaker before *D.O.A.* started to shape up?

LK: I got involved making films when I was in high school, so it was quite a few years before *D.O.A.*, and my interest in filmmaking started as a result of being so bored with high school. I had this English teacher, who for some reason or another suggested that I maybe would be interested in making films. So I got a Super 8 camera and I started shooting.

I went to New York, to the School of Visual Arts, and I started getting involved with all kinds of things and films. Kind of by accident, I got involved in the porno business, shooting what in those days they called loops, which were these short films on 42nd St. These guys would go in and drop in quarters and I think they would watch a scene for 30 seconds or a minute, I forget what it was, and then they would put another quarter in until the full loop played, which I think they were no longer than 10 minutes. But through some friends we had some connections and started making these loops and that went on for a while, and while I was doing that, I became interested in the porno actors and actresses and that's when I started making my first documentary. I was about 20 or 21 years old, and I made a film called *Porno Babies*. It was about the life of these actors and actresses and there were some pretty well known ones in there, like Andrea True, who later on had a hit song called "More, More, More" with her group called The Andrea True Connection. There was Marc Stevens, whose nom de plum was "Mr. 10 ½," and Harry Reems, who was the male star of *Deep Throat*. I shot a few scenes with Marilyn Chambers and Georgina Spelvin. I made that film, a feature-length film, but there was no place to show that kind of thing in those days. I went to Europe and showed it there, and it made the rounds.

Then I was working in lighting and within the business, involved in industrial films, surviving that way. It was sort of like...you did what you had to do to survive in the milieu of filmmaking and art. The fortunate thing was, in those days, your rent wasn't very high, and so you didn't have to always worry about making money. Of course, you had to worry about making a living, but there was never that pressure to keep making serious money, so you had a lot of free time to experiment with ideas and play around with stuff that's more difficult today, because now everything is geared toward success and careers. Myself, and the people I was involved with in that whole scene and in music and people I knew in the art scene, they weren't really thinking too much about a career. They were thinking about just enjoying themselves and experimenting with films and art and being creative. Eventually, the ones who had more talent got very serious and went deeper into it. But that was the kind of stuff that was going on before *D.O.A.*

Do you recall when you were first exposed to punk, be it musically, culturally or whatever? Or the first time it really hit you and made an impact?

I remember pretty distinctly because I lived in a neighborhood that was not far from CBGB's. At the very beginning of the whole punk thing, there was no real consciousness of "punk," you know? "This is punk" or "that is punk"...there were just things that were going on in different places. I remember going to CBGBs the first time, at a very early stage of it, and there was a pool table in back and some band I don't remember. Then I went back

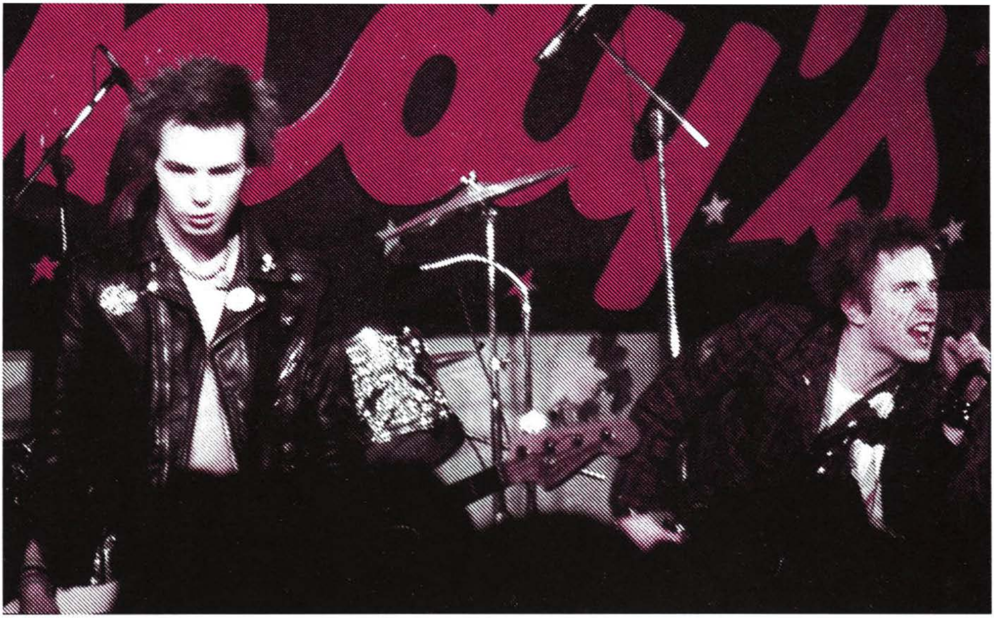
a few times after that, because it caught my eye, and the people there were interesting. The other thing is it wasn't really like a club...it was just this dive bar. Dark, dingy and cheap. Later on, I saw Patti Smith and a very early stage of the Talking Heads there. Then a little bit later, there was the Ramones. But it was at CBGB's when I first encountered it.

Before that, there was also Max's Kansas City, which was a little bit more uptown and was an actual music venue. I used to go there and just hang out and drink and whatever you did in that place. There was a real music scene and a real art scene. It was a combination of a lot of things. I was aware of various music things going on, but never really aware of the punk thing, you know, punk with a capitol P, until a little bit later, when the word starting getting around. This all happened within about a year period.

I guess you were just getting into that when you decided to document it?

Well, nothing is really that clear. I would go there and I would think about it and as it started evolving, and there were more people there, I was thinking maybe there's a film to make here. But it wasn't that easy to make a film about that because A: we were shooting it in 16mm and 16mm is very expensive, and B: you have to have sound in order to record the music properly. There were other guys that would just pick up a 16mm camera and just shoot scenes, because that was what they were into. I was thinking a little bit differently, because I was thinking more about making a movie as opposed to just getting shots. And as things started mushrooming and going ahead, meaning the punk thing, I actually started thinking about a screenplay or a film I wanted to make.

I had this idea that I wanted to do with possibly Patti Smith or someone else, and it was a story about a cab driver who lived above CBGB's, because there was a transient hotel there. So, I wrote the story about this down-and-out cab driver, who by accident meets this musician down there. And that was a conscious effort on my part to try and figure out a story that I could make with that whole thing, with the punk scene in the background. As I was doing that, I was getting deeper into it. Then I started thinking more about a documentary about it, but I wasn't sure if I wanted to do one in New York. And at that point I was thinking about going to London and shooting something there, and around that same time I heard the Sex Pistols were coming to the States. And then



everything changed, and I decided to really seriously pursue that.

And that was the beginning of *D.O.A.* I consciously said, “OK I’m gonna make this film.” It didn’t have a name. I just decided I wanted to shoot this Sex Pistols thing, and I made a list of about ten people I knew who had money or who had access to money, or knew someone who might have money. The thing about those times was there was no real independent movie scene, it was very difficult getting these kinds of films made, and the punk scene at that point wasn’t the kind of thing that would be attractive to an investor. We were shooting on 16mm, and the cameras were expensive. It was a complex situation that you have to put together in order to get this done, and then you have to develop the film, and then you have to make a print of the scenes that you shot, and then you have to get a machine to edit on, and in those days it was either a Steenbeck or a Moviola and that was expensive, and then of course you had to transfer the sound and make that a track. So the whole procedure was quite elaborate, it was essential filmmaking that has been around for years and years.

I didn’t like rock ’n’ roll movies too much, other than one film, Cocksuckrr Blues. I thought that was really incredible because it broke all those rules of rock filmmaking. Most rock ’n’ roll films were about prancing stars, and that didn’t interest me so much. They were also about the performance more than anything else. You shoot a performance with five or six cameras, you cut that together, and you have a movie. I was much more interested in what’s going around the music and behind the music, in the culture and that kind of thing, and how it can express what the music is about and what the scene is about. Not necessarily just by documenting the music, but by doing something else with it, another kind of editing, another kind of shooting. So, I applied those ideas pretty heavily to *D.O.A.*

When I was shooting and editing it, I had to discover a lot of things on my own because there was no model that I could look at and say, “Yeah, I would like to do this.” There were films that I thought were interesting, that had a bit of an influence on me... Andy Warhol films and there were Maya Deren films that I thought were really interesting, and a film like The Hardrr The Come. That was probably one of my favorites of that kind of filmmaking, where you have the music, you have the social context, you have the political context, and then you have the drug thing. I saw that many times in New York at midnight screenings, and I was very moved by the way that film was made, and the message that it had.

So, you were finally able to organize everything, and that’s when you decided you wanted to do this as a project. But you had to get that crew together, as well as figure out how you were actually going to follow this tour. But dealing with the legalities and the record labels would have been difficult.

That’s a funny question, because now we live in a very technical time where everything is about business and it’s organized, and before you can do anything you’ve got to sign releases. But there was none of that kind of thinking going on when I decided to make *D.O.A.* There weren’t huge record companies running around...there were some labels sniffing at the scene, but the sales were in their own category, not big like The Rolling Stones or The Beatles. This was quite marginal. The financiers and I weren’t thinking at all in terms of getting permission, because what we were essentially filming was the entire scene, what was going on around the tour. In order to do that, I had to shoot some performances, which I did. But we never actually got permission from anyone, and that was one of our objectives. Because as soon we were in a position of getting permission from everybody, we would be subverting what we were trying to do, because then there would be limitations put on us. So we just said, let’s go out there and do it, and see what happens. We had no contracts, nothing. There were a lot of problems that came up later on, but on the tour itself it was great.

At one point, the money people in New York cut off our funds. We were in Texas. We were in this hotel, and downstairs, there was this fancy store. We went in and charged all these kimonos and expensive clothing and then we pawned them. Because we knew the money was getting cut off. It was an insane adventure with one objective: let's get this in the can and see what happens. Along the way, a lot of things happened that allowed me to do what I wanted to do in terms of filming it. I'm really grateful to Tom Forcade from *High Times*, who funded the film with other projects, like *Polk County Pot Plane*. He later ran into some personal problems and ended up committing suicide. He'd wanted to get into the film business and work on movies that pertained to pot and other drugs. I introduced him to Andy Warhol in New York. There was a movie being made with him called *Cocaine Cowboys* - a really awful film - and they wanted him to be involved with stuff like that. We wanted to start our own company.

He figured that *D.O.A.* would appeal to the drug audience?

Tom wasn't just into drugs; he was interested in the counterculture. Whether it was artistic or political or drugs. His magazine was just mainly about marijuana, but it was a way to finance the other things he wanted to do. There was testimony in Washington at one point regarding the marijuana laws, and Tom was asked to appear there. As his testimony, he brought in a pie and he pied the senator that was questioning him. He was that kind of person.

The culture he was involved with had started in the '60s, and that was all changing. That's why he was interested in the punk thing...it was the new counterculture that was going on. And he was interested in S&M and all kinds of activities. He had a pot delivery service going in New York, pot speakeasies and a bunch of stuff

When you were shooting, how did the audience react to having a film crew there?

It was an advenrure...we were in America, but it wasn't familiar territory. We were in Louisiana, Texas, Georgia and Memphis. I would call it Redneck America for the most part. So the people that would come out for the shows had some of that element to them. But then you'd have the people that were looking for the craziness. And, of course, some people that were into punk, but they hadn't been exposed to much.

In many cases, they were opposed to any media because that was sort of in the air. "Don't point a camera at me...what are you doing here?" But other people found it interesting.

I actually bought a suit jacket and shot dressed that way. So I wouldn't look like a punk or like I was with a regular TV film crew. I wanted to look kind of straight and just be left alone, not be associated with anything. I was using local guys to assist. I had a couple guys fly in from Canada to shoot for me. I had people sneaking in cameras. It was kind of like a military operation, just trying to get this thing done.

We had this one fucking awful sound man that I'd hired. He showed up with 300 pounds of equipment in this big case. He was really straight...as soon as he showed up it caused problems just because of the way he looked. He had this big beard and he was like a burly bear, a redneck. There was no one else I could use, so I just grabbed his tape recorder and made him stand out of the way.

Every time I turned around, there was another problem that I had to solve. Cops chasing us...a cop broke my camera. That was expensive. You can see it happen in the film. But these problems ended up adding to the texture of the film. I started understanding how to incorporate the energy that these problems were giving me, and how to make that work for the film. I wanted the audience to feel the insanity of it.

What happened when it was finished?

When I was finally done, punk was kind of over. It was almost embarrassing to address the subject. After the Sex Pistols broke up and Sid died, time was moving by. The club scene had changed, and punk was sort of passe when I finished the film. There was still a residual energy. It ended up playing midnights. I remember the first screening we had was for all these distributors...the screening room was mobbed. Everyone showed up to see it. One of the distributors came up to me and said, "This is really a great film, but it belongs in a museum. I don't know what to do with it." I was really pissed off about that, because there was all this fucking energy there but the film business people are even more conservative than music business people. They had no idea...there was a gap in the culture. The initial punk thing had ended, the new music hadn't started yet, and what do you do with this thing?

Not that many people were completely exposed to punk at that time. The other thing that happened was...after Nancy was murdered and Sid died in New York, there was this really negative feeling towards punk. It was like, "Ugh...this is really ugly. Death and drugs and awful things that happen." There was a real ugliness then that was connected with the scene.

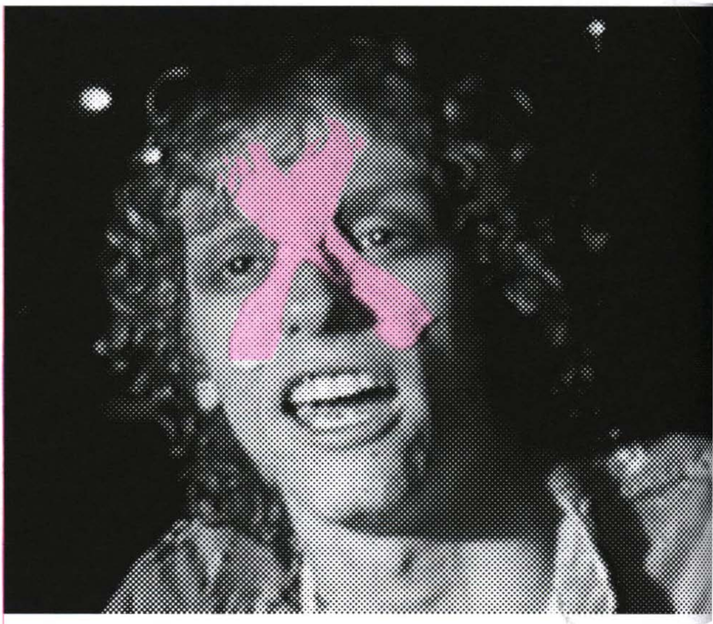
So we decided to release it ourselves. Tom was dead by then, so I found someone else who was a rug dealer. He sold rugs. He helped us get it set for release, and it played in New York for a couple years, played around the world in midnight runs and it eventually got a sort of cult following.

Going on to your meeting and working with John Spaceley on Gringo...how did all that get started?

I got the idea for that film as I was finishing D.O.A. New York was sort of in this weird place...the art scene, the downtown scene. The neighborhood I was living in was the Lower East Side—Alphabet City—that's a really amazing section of New York. It's a neighborhood of immigrants, of artists, of musicians, and poets like Ginsberg and Richard Hell, going way back a hundred years...jazz musicians and Charlie Mingus. You can go on and on with the categories of people who lived there who were slightly outside the system. So that neighborhood was also where the drug dealers were really operating out of, and people from outside the city who would come to Manhattan on the weekends would gravitate towards there to buy whatever they needed. It's also where CBGB's and Max's Kansas City were, and tons of other places. It was a very rich neighborhood as far as the mixing of cultures, but was very poor in terms of the economy. It was also very dangerous. And the drug trade was a street business that was organized and run by Hispanics. And it was very fertile. On Avenue C or B you'd walk down the street and see a line of people— 50 or 60 or 70 of them—waiting in front of an abandoned building. These were people there to cop their drugs. And you have a car pick up and a limousine, music people and rock stars, police and everything.

I once saw a school bus early in the morning parked on Avenue C or D, and I got closer to the school bus and the school bus driver was sort of leaned down shooting up dope and then later on he'd be picking up kids. You find dead bodies—I found a few—and it was not uncommon. In the context of all this, you have all these artists and musicians living there. It was a very fertile area for that because it was also very cheap to have an apartment or an art space. And not far away there were rock 'n' roll clubs that were opening up. So there was this constant activity going on, it was very busy in terms of the drug business. I think that business was interconnected with the business of culture, meaning the music business and art and CBGB's and Max's. And I thought I wanted to make a movie about this whole scene because it's absolutely amazing.

At that point, John Spaceley was living on a rooftop and hanging out on St. Mark's Place. And the first time he came to my attention I saw him skateboarding in his white boots. Then I saw him around a few times and we had a conversation.



One thing led to another and I decided to use him in the film. It's because he was like this street character who was always around, and he called himself "The Mayor of St. Mark's Place." St. Mark's was like the main entry into the Lower East Side and everyone would eventually walk down St. Mark's Place and this is where Spaceley would sell his pot, his nickel bags and stuff. Or he would cop for people. So the way he would do that is if somebody needed some dope or some coke, he'd say, "Ok, come with me, I'll go get it for you, but you have to buy me a bag." And that's how he survived. That's how our whole relationship began.

Spaceley was not like a cool character, and what I mean by that is he was kinda weird and didn't really give a shit about how he looked and didn't try to be cool the way Johnny Thunders did, or somebody from the Dead Boys. Spaceley was in his own category: kind of weird. Largely because he was from California and had this California thing happening: he was originally from Venice, with an Armenian background. Hardly anyone liked him. He really grated on people and he used to get beat up all the time. That's how he lost his eye...he got beat up by a drag queen. So he had all these misadventures all the time and I just found him to be interesting on that level. The more I talked to him, the more I started to see the humanity in him that I thought would make him a good character to work with. I worked with him for quite a while to shoot those scenes because we shot mainly at night and I would hang out with him for a few days or a week, and then, based on what I observed, I would write these scenes. I would get all these characters who were real people that I met through Spaceley. I'd assemble them and we would shoot these scenes without any permission from the police department. If we wanted to light a scene and needed electricity, we would break into the street lamps. In New York, on the street lights they've got this little lid on it, and if you just break that and know what you're doing—we had an electrician with us—we could tap into that, get some free electricity, set up a bunch of lights, shoot and then get the fuck out. The whole thing was done that way.

Did it all go according to plan, considering not just the subject matter but also the way you were shooting it?

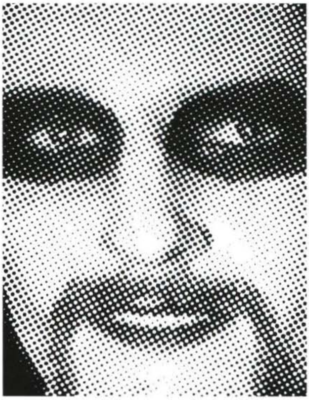
It was always hairy. It was always dangerous and morally kind of weird because the way people got paid was with drugs. There was no money for actors; we just had enough money for film stock and for cameras. It was organized in this very loose way, where I pay my crew as much as I could, and the street talent would get like $10. And we'd hang out after we finished shooting and the production manager would run around giving people $10 and trying to get their signatures for releases. It was always a problem. Nothing ever worked out the way you wanted it to because these weren't real, reliable people punching in the clock to be actors; it was kind of like filming a documentary. And that's what I wanted. I was directing, I wasn't filming—sometimes I would film a few scenes, but I couldn't just be behind the camera so I had this cameraman working with us, Raffi Ferrucci, and if I felt like something was a little weird, I would hit the camera to give it a knock so that it would jerk and you could see that in the shot, just to get some tension going. It took us seven months to film that thing, and we were really tired by the end of it.

And then once it was done, it took a while for you to kind of figure out how you were going to do anything with it release-wise?

It takes about a year for me to edit a movie, and that movie was edited with a structure in mind, but some characters that I wanted to develop further would disappear and I had to modify some of the storyline. And then to get the distribution for it was difficult because—well, it played at the Berlin Film Festival, and it played at a lot of places, but distributors were really afraid of it. There was this journalist who saw the film—a right-wing conservative. He wanted to use the film to further his agenda, saying this film shows the depravity of modern American culture and all this stuff and he wanted to make it an anti-drug movie, so we had all these kinda problems. At one point I decided to have the world premiere at Rikers Island prison, and I think we did seven or eight screenings there with different groups of inmates. When people watched the film there, they couldn't turn the lights off because you can't have the inmates in darkness, so the lights would only be partially down. We had screenings for the over-40s and the under-30s and the girls and women. I would bring John with me to all these screenings, and he would sign autographs and the people really liked him, just as a personality.

Even when that film came out, there was still no connection between AIDS and heroin and shooting up. It was that time period—crack was coming out, AIDS was coming out—I think almost everyone in that film died because of AIDS. It captures a really intense time period in New York, the time period between the end of disco and the start of something else; that weird '80s period, which was for me the period of Reagan because Reagan had a huge, very bad influence on American culture.

So I associate that film with that period. Of course Spaceley died in '93 of AIDS and I actually filmed his death... because he wanted me to make a movie about him fighting AIDS and I shot with him for a little while. Then I was in Europe and I came back to New York and I got a call from St. Vincent's Hospital. I got there and he wasn't in his room, and I had this big argument with the doctors and nurses and administration. I said, "I saw him here a few months ago. He was here." I had my camera with me and the guy came out and told me to follow him. I went down the elevator to the morgue, and I just had this feeling because he didn't tell me why we were going down there. Right before we stepped into the morgue room, I turned my camera on and started shooting. I walked in and here's Spaceley on this slab, dead. I actually used that in films later on.



Born to Lose was this huge, long project for you, right?

Born to Lose shows the first time I filmed Johnny Thunders. It was at Max's Kansas City in 1979, after I finished the *D.O.A.* film, but it was before I finished editing it. I went back to New York and I got a call from this guy who wanted me to shoot Johnny Thunders, so I went in and we shot a performance. This was before MTV, but we already had this MTV kind of idea with Johnny, so I had this whole thing I shot with him. And then the guy ended up not paying us and just disappeared with the footage. I only saw the footage once and I thought it was really great. So I got to know Johnny Thunders, and when I was making *The Story of a Junkie* or *Gringo*, I was also shooting Johnny.

At first he was going to do the soundtrack for *Gringo* and then I decided to do something else with him, to do a separate movie about Johnny. The scenes were of him playing the part of Christ. I shot him at the Mudd Club and had all this footage. But then he had a legal problem with his manager and it involved a murder and they had to leave the country so Johnny and his manager left for—I think it was France—and they ended up staying there. I had all this footage and I never ended up making the movie, and not using his music in *Gringo* because it was just not quite appropriate for that film. A few years later I released a soundtrack of the recording I filmed at the Mudd Club, which was through ROIR Records, which was a label that only released things on cassette. That was called *Stations of the Cross*.

And then I was in Mexico for a while and I hadn't talked to Johnny and I was shooting a film with a group of Mexican-Indians on this spiritual walk between Mexico City and Los Angeles, which is...a really fucking long walk. Then I was in New York mixing *Rock Soup*, a film I made about the homeless, and I got a call from someone who said to pick up the paper. There was a short story in there about Johnny Thunders dying. I hadn't talked to him in a few years, but I knew how he fit in with the whole New York punk scene and that he was a very important person. His death sort of signified the end of that period.

I bought a Hi 8 camera, and I flew down to New Orleans because he'd just died there a few days before that. I stayed in New Orleans for a few weeks filming the circumstances of his death, which are pretty weird and it involved this whole fucking street scene in New Orleans. And then I decided to try to make a movie about him, but I don't like typical rock 'n' roll type of movies, so it took me a couple of years of playing around with his story and collecting things about him that were shot by other people to try and figure out how to make this film.

For more on Lech Kowalski, visit www.extinkt.com

DOBERMANN

Dir. Jan Kounen / 1997

People with expensive watches cause trouble.

This is the type of painfully over-stylized GQ crime fantasy where the unflappable, lawless protagonist can't step out of his Maserati without wearing sunglasses and a black leather trench coat. Every character dresses in monochromatic silk suits, styles their hair and holds their guns at practiced angles. And to make matters worse, it's *French*.

Actual couple Vincent Cassel and Monica Bellucci star as the film's untouchable Bonnie et Clyde, engaged in a crimewave packed with countless one-note stereotypes and textbook lunatics. One of the latter is Sunny, an exotically flamboyant transvestite who frequents a skull-themed dance club. One of her contemporaries is a vinyl-clad partyboy with a green rubber mohawk (!), gyrating with bass-fueled abandon beneath the throbbing lights. For her final scene, Sunny makes an abrupt lifestyle switch to full '77-style punk complete with spiked hair, pegged plaid pants and a carefully torn Anarchy T.

Girls Gone Wild, "Wazzaaaaap" and the prevalence of empty, inflated underworld operas like this were all shining indicators that the late '90s represented the dawn of an irrefutable descent in human culture. Finding entertainment in this festering wreck is like looking for a fun-size Twix bar in month-old cat litter. (*ZC*)

DOGS IN SPACE

Dir. Richard Lowenstein / 1987

A household of punks and other people who haven't bathed in a while have various dramas and fits of boredom in 1978 Melbourne.

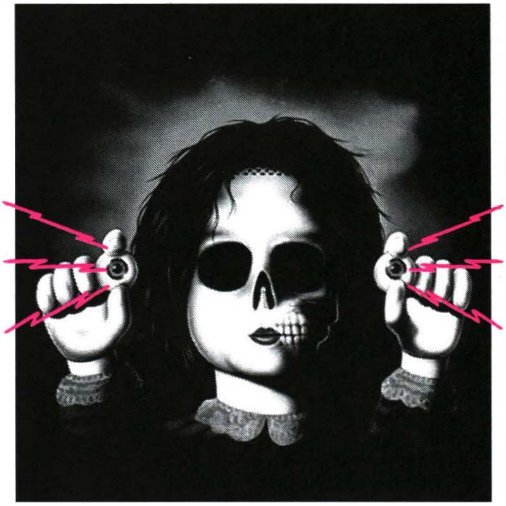
Michael Hutchence schleps around as he plays a character that looks exactly like someone who would lead hit band INXS. This guy didn't even try to look like someone from 1978, but I guess the producers didn't complain because he was their only star. The members of the admittedly convincing punk household (including curly-haired Nique Needles) like to party, eat, play music, get rowdy and do heavy drugs. The punks "uggh" and "oi" it up while recklessly driving around at night. They finally get in a car accident and find it very amusing. Punks hang out on the street waiting for a David Bowie concert and a skinhead picks on Hutchence. The film is aimless, like the lives of the people it represents. It starts out interesting, but soon gives you the feeling of actually spending time with these burnouts. Gestating, go-nowhere plot threads include Skylab shrapnel and a semi-psychotic who never goes ape. Among the Australian bands featured in the film: Whirlywind, Too Fat to Fit Through the Door, Thrush & the Cunts and Primitive Calculators. (*BC*)

DOIN' TIME

Dir. George Mendeluk / 1985

The fun never stops for the zany inmates at John Dillinger Penitentiary.

A wacky prison party comedy written by five people! Rigid character actor John Vernon plays against type as a lovable toughie named Big Mac. He's so cool that he catches a chicken drumstick thrown during a riot and eats it. He's also considered to have the nicest dong of all the prisoners. Mac throws a party in the slammer, inviting girls with mohawks and Russ Meyer favorite Kitten Natividad. At the party, Animal—a white Mr. T look-alike played by Nicholas Worth—eats a live piranha before an applauding crowd. Richard Mulligan is in top form as the warden Mongo. He gets turned on easily by women and, to take care of it, jumps in a shower with his clothes on, bangs his head against a wall and humps a pillow. Sadly, like a lot of '80s fare (Ghost Fever; Teen Wolf Too; Meatballs 2) Doin' Time inexplicably turns into a boring boxing film. Even Muhammad Ali gets in on the act. Features the Elvis song parody "All Fucked Up." (*BC*)



DOLLS

Dir. Stuart Gordon / 1987

Antique porcelain dolls attack rural vacationers.

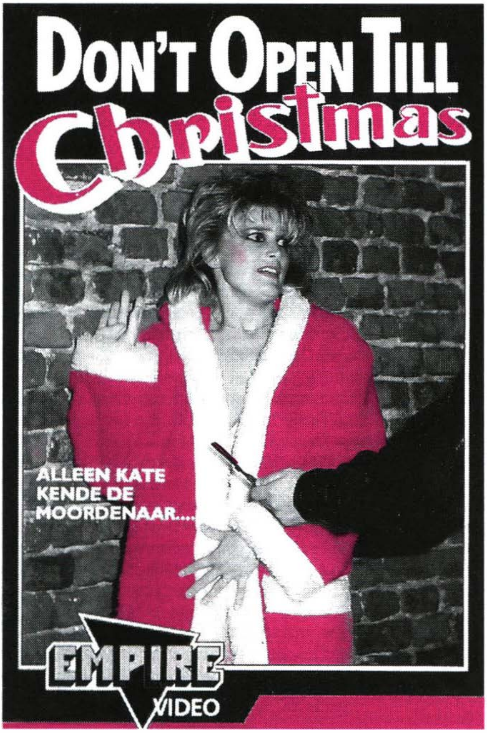
Immediate punks! The film's first shot features two neonized teen girls—one with a red mohawk—getting run off a country road. The reckless driver is the wicked stepmother of Judy, an over-imaginative 7-year-old stuck with her rotten parents on a rural British vacation. When the car breaks down during a storm, the family finds shelter with elderly couple the Hartwickes in their dusty estate. The two roadside girls (Enid and Isabel) later burst in and are offered a night's stay as well. They blast quasi-punk from a boombox and plan to steal all the "antiques" from their eccentric dollmaker hosts. Inevitably, things take a turn for the worse as the dolls themselves wreak supernatural acts of violence on all the guests, and Judy allies with terrified man-child Ralph to escape unharmed.

Though nowhere near as effective as Gordon's Re-Animator just two years earlier, *Dolls* contains some downright creepy moments, including some creative self-mutilation from Enid and—most impressively—the gory dispatching of the director's real-life wife Carolyn Purdy-Gordon. (*ZC*)

DON'T OPEN 'TIL CHRISTMAS

Dir. Edmund Purdom | 1984

A Christmas-hating serial killer is murdering men dressed as Santa Claus.



In the early '80s, there was a smattering of both killer Santa and Santa-*killing* flicks unleashed on moviegoers. *Don't Open 'Til Christmas* falls into the latter Dead Santa category and, amongst some tough competition, wins out as the sleaziest, cheesiest and most inept of all yuletide slashers. The film is a clumsy mess that took almost two years (and at least three directors) to complete. Consequently, it has a disjointed feeling, with numerous shifts in tone and style resulting in some spectacularly fragmented storytelling.

Someone is killing Santas throughout London, and weird detective Harris from Scotland Yard is on the case. Edmund Purdom, who was also the film's initial director, played the inspector shortly after his role in the incredible 1982 slasher *Pieces*. Here, he seems to have some sort of connection with the murders and spends most of the film hassling a busker couple and wandering around the city. There's also a creepy reporter named Giles (Alan Lake) who writes amusing headlines like "Santa Slain In Soho" and also seems to be involved in the killings. Scattered throughout the film are several crude and gory Santa murders in a variety of locations. A man is castrated while taking care of his business at a urinal, one gets chased around in the London Dungeon museum, a Santa gets speared through the head while blowing a party horn, an undercover cop Santa gets kicked in the crotch with a knife-shoe and another gets his face burnt by a chestnut warmer.

Before one Santa meets his violent demise, he has an encounter with some prime London punkers. A group of colorful youths are hanging out smoking a joint. Among them is a girl with a spiky lime green and purple 'do, a big dude with a rainbow rooster wave and a skinny guy with a bright red mohawk. They all wear plenty of leather and chains and one even has a flashy pair of zipper pants. They hassle Santa as he stumbles out of a pub, so he flips them off and scoots away on his bicycle. The kids give chase and eventually steal his bike for laughs. Between gratuitous Santa slaughters, there's some unfunny British sex-comedy type stuff, several retarded plot twists, Caroline Munro sings a horrible disco song called "I Am the Warrior of Love," a third-rate John Carpenter style synth number is repeated over and over and a peep-show stripper named Cherry saves the day. (*SH*)

DOOM ASYLUM

Dir. Richard Friedman | 1987

A disfigured maniac stalks and kills trespassing teenagers in an abandoned hospital.

One of the more eminent rushed cheapies from the golden age of VHS. "Ten years earlier," a wealthy divorce lawyer and his girlfriend are killed in a horrible car crash. Ghost stories claim that his zombie now haunts the local abandoned hospital, using autopsy instruments to slaughter any intruders. Enter five perky, preppy teens, including the token dweeb and the short-lived stereotype of the flamboyantly effeminate African-American goofball (as popularized in *Mannequin* and *Revenge of the Nerds*). The kids are all inexplicably excited for a weekend of indoor camping at the forbidden ER. As they arrive, a harsh punk squall can be heard from inside. "That's Tina and the Tots. They play all the local sewers." The Tots consist of a French keyboardist with crimped dreadlocks and a girl in a wedding veil and black leather tutu who pounds away on drums covered in Russian political symbols. Tina herself sports an enormous bleached topknot and waist-high boots. The punks and squares naturally form an immediate rivalry ("Screw you, spikehead!"), which distracts them from the ever-looming undead antagonist.

Former *Penthouse* Pet of the Year Patty Mullen, who chose to keep her clothes on for the role, is the female prep lead. Here she plays an orphan who finds comfort in referring to her boyfriend as "Mom." The movie features many of these unique—if questionable—touches. After killing a black character, the meatfaced villain declares, "I hate rap music!" Later, there's an impressively gruesome toe-shearing scene, followed by an equally inspired food-processor incident. The crumbling walls showcase some of the finest background graffiti you'll ever see, including "LOVE STINK", "SATOMASACISM" and "METALICA."

Another anomalous aspect here is the incessant cutaways to classic horror films; not just for a couple seconds, but entire sections of the movies. Friedman explains that when *Doom Asylum* was finished, it clocked at around 70 minutes. The producers considered this unacceptable for a feature, and demanded that the finished product be expanded to meet the market standard. Luckily, those same producers also held the rights to a few forgotten Tod Slaughter (the original *Sweeney Todd*) pictures, and a few splices later, the film was fattened up and ready to go public. The director was semi-simultaneously working as editor on the artcrash documentary *Mondo New York*, which featured a very memorable performance of the song "Fuck You" by Dean & the Weenies. He had hoped to cast that group's gangly, bald lead singer as the vocalist for *Doom Asylum's* noise band, but those plans went off the rails, resulting in the all-female Tots. (*ZC*)

DOUBLE DRAGON

Dir. James Yukich I 1994

Two brothers must fight the ultimate evil
over a special medallion.

There's nothing wrong with white people practicing martial arts. Chuck Norris is really good at it. Van Damme and Seagal are at least entertaining when they try. But when you get non-pros like Robert Patrick and Scott Wolf attempting it under the helm of the schmuck who did *The Return of Bruno*, it's gonna fall flat. Patrick looks like a Vegas magician and Wolf resembles one of the Campbell's Soup Kids dressed up for Halloween. At least actual martial artist Mark Dacascos plays Wolf's brother. But even with a real live Asian ass-kicker in the mix, the action scenes come off pretty damn clumsy.

As this story takes place in the year 2007, there are rampant armies of evil mimes, postmen, dudes in beanies, kung fu zombies and punks. "Bo Abobo" (Nils Allen Stewart) is the leader of the Mohawk Gang. He eventually mutates into a superpunk that kind of resembles a veiny, bulbous testicle with spikes. There is a ha-ha-larious moment where Abobo is tied up and force-fed spinach, which makes him cry and fart. The eternally worthless Andy Dick plays a weatherman. This is the worst based-on-a-videogame movie ever. (*BC*)

DOUBLE TEAM

Dir. Tsui Hark I 1997

A Belgian and a basketball player punch, kick and shoot.

Formerly respected action film master Tsui manages to outslum John Woo with this epically wooden star vehicle for Dennis Rodman and the already-flagging Jean-Claude Van Damme. The latter plays Quinn, a fearless Special Forces operative who's called out of retirement for a final strike against international supervillain Stavros (a truly sculpted Mickey Rourke). A botched CIA ambush leaves Stavros' 6-year-old son torn apart by bullets, and his retribution results in an almost-spectacular carnival shootout. One baby-holding-a-grenade later, Quinn wakes up on an inescapable secret island populated by "retired" government agents, à la *The Prisoner*. Returning to the mainland via a combo of pure will and lousy screenwriting, he teams with mercenary weapons expert Yaz (Rodman) to rescue his pregnant wife from Stavros' clutches.

Incredibly, the film's lone punk scene happens entirely without the garish NBA superstar. Though he's introduced dressed like an android at Mardi Gras, Rodman dons a suit to pass through the streets of Europe incognito. His purple hair and multiple facial piercings seemingly rendered invisible, he quietly approaches a gaggle of black-lace goths and mohawked panhandlers. Van Damme sits with them, wearing shabby street chic and a Pauly Shore wig, nestled in among the subcultural elite like E.T. hiding in a pile of stuffed animals. (*ZC*)

DOWN AND OUT IN BEVERLY HILLS

Dir. Paul Mazursky I 1986

Nick Nolte is a bum taken in by a rich couple
with problems of their own.

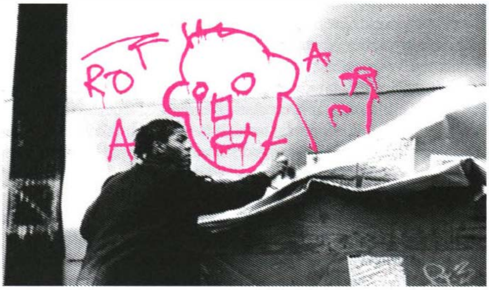
Nolte gets a glimpse of his own future as a grizzled dirtbag. He eats dog food and gets down to his birthday suit. Richard Dreyfuss does the nasty with his cleaning woman, played by Elizabeth Peña. Usually Dreyfuss sucks hard as an actor, but you have to admire his dedication to the craft in this scene; when their coitus is interrupted, you can actually sense him pulling his penis out of her with studied subtlety. Bette Midler does her practiced new age yuppie mom character. Their son is a video artist who makes dad a short film that expresses his feelings. It has clips of the A-bomb, The Three Stooges and a man with a mohawk smashing in a television set with a sledgehammer while a hardcore punk dude looks on (all to the song "Helium Bar" by The Weirdos). Later, the son shows up at a posh party with his new wave friends, one of whom looks like Klaus Nomi. The editing is terrible and the camera angles are lazy. Paul Mazursky is a hack of a director who has managed to trick people into thinking he knows what he's doing by filling his films with good actors like Nolte and, uh, Little Richard. (*BC*)

DOWNTOWN 81

Dir. Edo Bertoglia I 1981

Basquiat wanders the streets waxing poetic
while No Wave bands play on.

If you're planning on watching the 2004 documentary *Kill Your Idols* on the N.Y. No Wave scene, you should pass on it. Spare yourself the self-indulgent musings of the current groups and watch t



feature, which contains the real meat on the matter. Nothing substitutes witnessing actual concert footage of DNA, Tuxedomoon, James White and the Blacks, Kid Creole & the Coconuts, The Plastics and others. There's also Jean-Michel Basquiat, the supposed "star," but he's almost dwarfed by the sheer weight of the New York art and music world inhabitants that populate the proceedings with him. Boring beat-style narration by Jean-Michel permeates the film, but it is fascinating to watch him create graffiti art right on the street while filming. Encounters with N.Y. culture luminaries such as Fab 5 Freddy, The Sugarhill Gang, Debbie Harry, Jarmusch staple Eszter Balint, photographer/filmmaker Amos Poe and others fairly stagger belief. It's almost as if the directors were worried that the city would be nuked after filming and this would be its last will and testament. For anyone with any interest in NYC counterculture of the late '70s to mid '80s, this is a genuine must-see. (*JS*)

DR. ALIEN

Dir. David DeCoteau I 1989

A terminal dweeb becomes sexually irresistible
when used in an alien experiment.

Wesley (Billy Jacoby) is an uptight college freshman who unknowingly volunteers for extraterrestrial research. One oversized hypodermic needle and he's dressing in casual clothing and pinned to the girls' locker room floor by every busty co-ed on campus. Even A-grade B-movie nuditizers like Linnea Quigley, Ginger Lynn Allen and Michelle Bauer make quick appearances to disrobe in a rabid frenzy. Intergalactic scientist Ms. Xenobia ('80s poster blonde Judy Landers) is uncontrollably drawn to her human guinea pig as well.

As his Bad Boy appeal intensifies, Wesley begins doing outrageous things, such as taping an Iron Maiden poster to the wall of his bedroom. He even joins rock band The Sex Mutants. When his mother asks what kind of music they play, the bassist explains, "If you had to describe us, I guess you could say that our core is your good, old-fashioned headbanging heavy metal rock 'n' roll with a surface gloss of glitter glam and a touch of death...with a definite punk anarchist influence." That final bit is personified by spiky member Slash, his jet-black hair, tattoos and chains mishandled enough to result in one of the most entertainingly off-base stereotype punks on record. Once the band's family dinner is done, they're off to their gig with The Tangpoons at dive club The Harry Armpit. The bar is filled with heavy-metal screwjobs and graffiti like "KILL" and "SKULL"! Wesley spikes his hair, tears off his shirt and rocks the mic over the max with a Dio-esque anthem that drives the crowd into a simulated frenzy. Eventually, the aliens reveal their true form in an impressive laserstorm that reduces the club and its scant punk patrons to smoldering cinders. Non-punk scenes from this film were later used in the 1997 clip collection *Bimbo Movie Bash.* (*ZC*)

DR. CALIGARI

Dir. Stephen Soyodion / 1989

Sadistic experimentations on the carnally ill.

Visual criminal/porn director Rinse Dream dropped his alter ego for this in-name-only remake, a drastically enhanced follow-up to surreal adult classics *Café Flesh* and *Nightdreams*. Angular ice maiden Dr. Caligari (Madeleine Reynal) is a chain-smoking psychotherapist who runs a sexually experimental insane asylum. In an effort to assist troubled Mrs. Van Houten (Laura Albert) with her "nympholepsy," Caligari exposes the patient to endless drug-induced nightmares involving oozing sores, slit throats and a million-color rainbow of new wave neon hues. In one memorable scene, Van Houten reaches into a pompadoured scarecrow's pants zipper and finds her forearm singed and smoking.

This is the only film to earn its listing here based on its generally garish aesthetic rather than individual punk characters, though it could easily be argued that several of the asylum's patients display anti-cultural fashion leanings. Dialogue sounds like it was lifted from an autistic slam poetry war, and the warehouse sets are an opium-marinated shadow of *Pee-wee's Playhouse. Repo Man*'s Jennifer Balgobin appears as the ward's head nurse, and one of the inmates is played by Magie Song, multilingual vocalist for groundbreaking LA band The Fibonaccis. (*ZC*)

DRACULA'S WIDOW

Dir. Christopher Coppola I 1989

A ravenous vampiress lords over Los Angeles.

Raymond—a conveniently Dracula-obsessed museum proprietor played by *Electric Dreams*' Lenny von Dohlen—accidentally receives a crate containing Dracula's widow Vanessa (*Emmanuelle*'s Sylvia Kristel). She wastes no time before feeding on some broad-mohawked LA lowlifes and transforming Raymond into her vampiric slave. She even pops up to participate in a ritual sacrifice performed by a bevy of satanic street thugs, one of whom sports a close-cropped punk 'do. When the she-beast learns her husband was killed by Van Helsing, she decides to settle the score. Meanwhile, the legendary monster hunter finds evidence of Vanessa's arrival and the war is on, resulting in epic supernatural combat and dynamic rubber bat effects. The directorial debut from the Stephen Baldwin equivalent of the Coppola family, Christopher would go on to artistically fail in practically every film genre, and is currently at work on his latest production *Big Bad Voodoo Mama.* (*ZC*)

DRAGNET

Dir. Tom Monkiewic I 1987

A zanily mismatched cop duo battles slaves of
the Prince of Darkness.

The cardboard TV drama is treated to an unlikely comic makeover that paved the way for today's relentless acid rain of low comedy remakes. Dan Aykroyd's Joe Friday narrates a loving ode to the streets of LA, including a description of the technicolored lowlife punks that frequent Melrose Avenue kitsch shop Wacko.

A mysterious organization called P.A.G.A.N. is wreaking havoc across the city, and detective Friday is reluctantly partnered with fledgling investigator Pep Streebeck (Tom Hanks).

While chasing down clues at the zoo, the officers run across a punk lion. As far as I know, this is the first in cinematic history, and I can now declare with authority that the King of the Jungle looks even more majestic with a foot-high mohawk. Later, when the duo goes undercover to infiltrate the satanic gang, Friday outdoes the mighty beast with a truly impressive punk costume topped off with an anti-gravitational cherry-colored rooster cut. The boys are handed two sets of P.A.G.A.N.'s mandatory goat leggings and soon bear witness to a massive "occult" celebration in a scene as offensive to actual Satanists as it'd be to born-again Christians. During the event, the group's name is revealed as an acronym for "People Against Goodness And Normalcy," and it becomes clear that the massive organization consists mainly of bikers and hillbillies.

By the time you're watching a punkified Aykroyd mud-wrestling a giant robotic snake, it's already too late. Christopher Plummer, Dabney Coleman, original *Dragnet* TV series star Harry Morgan and a framed photo of the great Jack Webb add some level of respectability to the proceedings...but a plotline play-by-play heavy metal rap song performed by Hanks and Aykroyd over the film's closing credits takes care of that real quick. (*ZC*)

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM

Dir. Marc Rocco / 1989

An old man (Jason Robards) dances to a Van Morrison song
with his wife and unknowingly transfers himself into
the body of metal dude Corey Feldman.

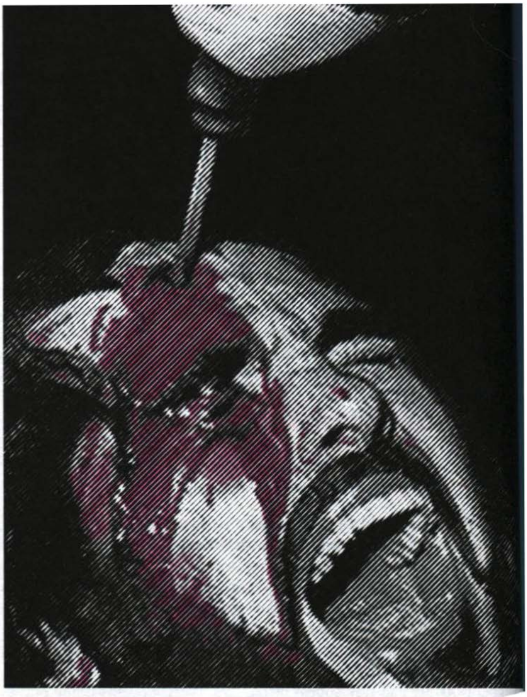
The weirdest of all the dual-Corey films. What's especially strange is the more likeable, usual star Haim plays second (or even third) banana to the hammy Feldman. This movie takes about 20 minutes or so to get going, and even when it does, it never makes a whole lot of sense. It's sort of the *Freaky Friday* plot, but a little more addled. The kid isn't trapped in the elder's body, but instead in some sort of dream limbo that is never made clear! Haim has red spiked hair (which we see him style with shaving cream), purposely rips holes in his pants and wears an army jacket. A school ruffian looks metal but wears a leather coat with a patch reading "PUNK" on it. Feldman's style is baffling, blending the metal aesthetic with Michael Jackson's. In one scene, he seduces the main female character in the gym by whipping out his sloppy Jackson moves to a new version of the song "Dream a Little Dream." I can say with no exaggeration that this might be the single most embarrassing moment in any actor's career. You can tell that Feldman truly believes he is the coolest, funniest person in the world. This movie has more musical montages than all the Rock films combined, and a man in a Misfits shirt can be spotted for a full second in the walking-down-the-steps segment. (*BC*)

THE DRILLER KILLER

Dir. Abel Ferrara / 1979

A starving artist becomes a starving maniac.

Celebrated NYC scum merchant Ferrara adopted the screen name Jimmy Laine to star as deeply troubled painter Reno. Apparently, painting postmodern buffalo and having two live-in girlfriends is too much for him, and he's besieged by violent nightmare visions that begin to tear at his psyche. Both of his bedmates are fans of lazybeat punk band Tony Cocacola and the Roosters, and the girls head out to the infamous Max's Kansas City to see the group strut their negligible stuff, leaving Reno alone to stew in his mounting insanity. Eventually, the band rent the space below Reno's fractured household, and the incessant noise pushes him over the edge. His descent kicks off with an extended scene of a skinned rabbit carcass being repeatedly stabbed in the head. Soon he's drilling holes through bums in abandoned subway cars, and *Driller Killer* reaches rampage level with Reno brazenly attacking the homeless on open sidewalks.



The filth and grime of the production make the gore more believable, especially in an unrelenting drill-through-the-forehead sequence that got the film banned in the UK for decades. There's also stark footage of an actual wino puking through his nose, but the most nauseating display is Ferrara messily chowing down half of a greasy pizza. This was the director's breakthrough non-porn feature, but that doesn't keep him from giving a nod to the "steamier" side of things with a completely unnecessary lesbian shower scene. There's been conjecture regarding whether or not The Roosters were an actual band, but after enduring five or so of their songs throughout the film, you'll sure as hell hope not. (*ZC*)

DRIVING ME CRAZY

Dir. Jon Turteltaub / 1991

A German man comes to the U.S. to sell a car
that runs on vegetables.

This was a star vehicle for German celeb Thomas Gottschalk. He teams up with Billy Dee Williams and they get involved in a decent bar fight, zany fast motion and a cool trying-on-clothes-and-sunglasses montage. Richard Moll plays a mohawked mechanic named Buzz. Milton Berle is a gay hotel desk clerk. That's right, even Uncle

Miltie got big screen roles in 1991. The fish-out-of-water jokes are actually pretty funny: Gottschalk goes to the Hollywood Walk of Fame and thinks it's where all the celebrities are buried. He angers some Hispanic gangsters by laughing at their bouncing Cadillac. His car gets stolen so he walks into a bar full of black men and demands one of them give it back. Billy Dee tells him they're going on a stakeout. Gottschalk replies, "But I have no money to eat steak out." Okay, so maybe this goes a little too far into Yahoo Serious territory, but it's good to support Gottschalk's endeavors. He was replaced by an ape on a German television show (no foolin') and that's got to be pretty damn painful. (BC)

DROP DEAD ROCK

Dir. Adam Dubin / 1995

Ruthless People meets *Airheads*.
That's pretty much it.

Subpar sitcom script and acting with no likeable characters. Adam Ant plays the manager of Spazz-O, a singer who once had fake bleached hair, wore a dog collar, sported a multicolored referee shirt and jangled chains over his crotch. His band was Riot Police and had a hit called "Inseminator." In the video, the guitar shoots semen. Hahaha? No. Twenty years later, Spazz-O's star has fallen so hard that hobos now pee on his cardboard image. This film is supposed to be funny, but the best they can do is have Spazz-O tell a lady that he will make her experience the best 30 seconds of her life. Lamer than anything you could ever imagine. A few once-respectable people show up in cameos: Joey Ramone calls Spazz-O an asshole; Debbie Harry plays a record producer; the viewer pushes eject on his VCR. (BC)

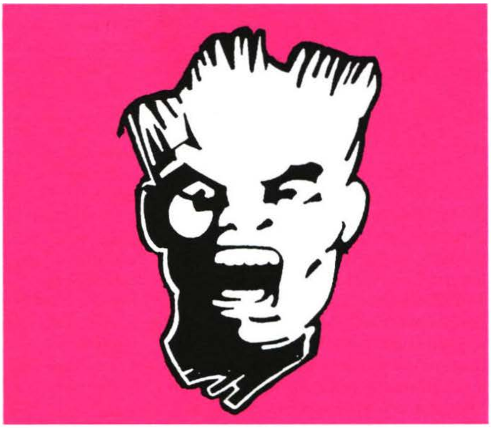
DU-BEAT-E-O

Dir. Alan Sacks / 1984

DuBEAT-e-o is the name of a sleazy would-be rock-movie director who must assemble his mess of Joan Jett footage into a comprehensible film before his shady investors mess him up good.

After the order comes down from a wheelchair-bound Swiss gangster that DuBEAT-e-o (Ray Sharkey) has 31 hours to finish his movie, he rescues his old editor Benny (Derf Scratch, founding bassist of Fear) from the clutches of debilitating cough syrup abuse and puts him to work at the editing station. For the next day and a half, they work feverishly to complete DuBEAT-e-o's masterpiece, oscillating between manic bouts of energy and descents into despair and uneasy sleep. Both men suffer anxiety nightmares featuring impromptu musical numbers by Linda "Texacala" Jones (of '80s cowpunk staples Tex and the Horseheads) and Johanna Went (performance artist and projectile vomiter), respectively.

The film has been deemed everything from incredibly ambitious to incredibly lazy, but it's basically its own doomed story. It was originally intended as a Runaways movie called *We're All Crazy Now*, but the band broke up before shooting commenced. Only Joan Jett stayed on, with actresses standing in for the departed Runaways (including '70s space cadet Rainbeaux Smith as Jett's drummer, who even contributes a song to the soundtrack). Eventually the plug was pulled and it wasn't until Jett proved successful as a solo artist that the film idea was resurrected, with former *Welcome Back, Kotter* and *Chico and the Man* writer Alan Sacks selected as director for the most formidable patch-job since Roger Corman's AIP days.



Again, financing fell through and Sacks was left with two-thirds of a weird cinematic triptych. But being a self-confessed punk, Sacks enlisted the help of his good friend El Duce (!) to help spice up the film with scatological still photos and porn footage that *should* have resulted in a lawsuit from the Jett camp.

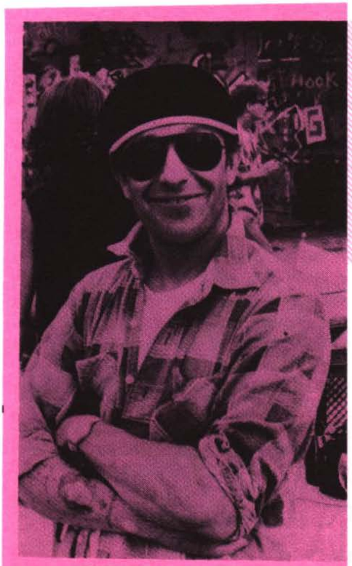
Sacks and El Duce provide a running commentary throughout the film, often at the expense of Joan Jett, who still comes off as awesome despite being juxtaposed with jizz shots and roadkill. A *Nashville*-esque bleeding of dialogue tracks ensues. Titles and graphics are by Gary Panter, whose now-ubiquitous Screamers logo makes an appearance a few minutes into the story as a stand-in for the special effects they couldn't afford.

The Lounge Lizards provide all incidental music and the off-screen director informs us that "they are a hot New York band right now." Additional soundtrack music is provided by Even Worse and founding 'Nardcore band Dr. Know.

Ray Sharkey's performance stands out in a sea of non-actors, but still amounts to little more than watered-down *Idolmaker* redux. His role in *Du-BEAT-e-o* marked a downward career slide and an increasing drug habit. He died of AIDS in 1993. (*KJ*)

ALAN SACKS

Director – *DU-BEAT-E-O*



OUR HERO, ALAN SACKS

AS: Some guys started to make a film about Joan Jett, and they...didn't do a very good job. They'd shot about 50 minutes of it and that was it. They couldn't finish it. So the financiers came to me to complete the film, but I decided to do it my own way and ended up conceiving this whole *Du-BEAT-e-o* phenomenon. That wasn't the original concept. I'd inherited this Joan Jett footage and now it was my job to complete this thing. In a sense, I was very much the Du-BEAT-e-o character. In fact, my street name at the time—and I had a tattoo—was "Du-BEAT-e-o."

DAM: You must get asked this a lot, but where did the name come from?

One of the kids out there, a host from *New Wave Theatre* named Zachary, came to me while I was doing a similar punk TV show. I was doing a pilot that included all the punks that hung out at the Club Lingerie. So Zachary came up to me while I was in the editing room and said, "You need a punk name. How about 'Du-BEAT-e-o'? How does that sound?" I was like, "What does that mean?" And he said, "Like Beat and Video." I thought about it; I wasn't the same age as the beats, but they were my idols so I took the name.

Things in the film are so fragmented and offensive. It must have been a difficult job to take on.

The guys that financed the film came to look it over. When I showed them what I was doing, they actually said that they wanted more disco. And I said, "Well, this ain't going to happen." They didn't want to give me any more money, so I finished it with Polaroids and stills and stock footage. And I filled it in with the most extreme stuff I could find. And I didn't give them the disco.

As someone that had been doing more accessible movie and TV work before this, was it hard to really immerse yourself in this stuff?

Well, I was already involved in the punk scene just by hanging out in the clubs and doing videos. There was a place called the Zero Club that was like going into the Third World. It was *the premier* after-hours club in LA. All of these crazy types of people inhabited the Zero Club, like Zachary, Texacala Jones, Johanna Went...it was all part of everything that was going on in the underground, and I wanted to document it. Document everything in LA at the time that hadn't been exposed before.

And that's how El Duce got involved?

It was scary having El Duce around because he was not controllable. But on the other hand, he was extremely witty. He came and looked at the film and then did his voiceovers...he was always very glib. That was him. And the kids on the scene were encouraging me to get El Duce. Everyone was throwing ideas at me, and I guess I was the guy that was coalescing everything.

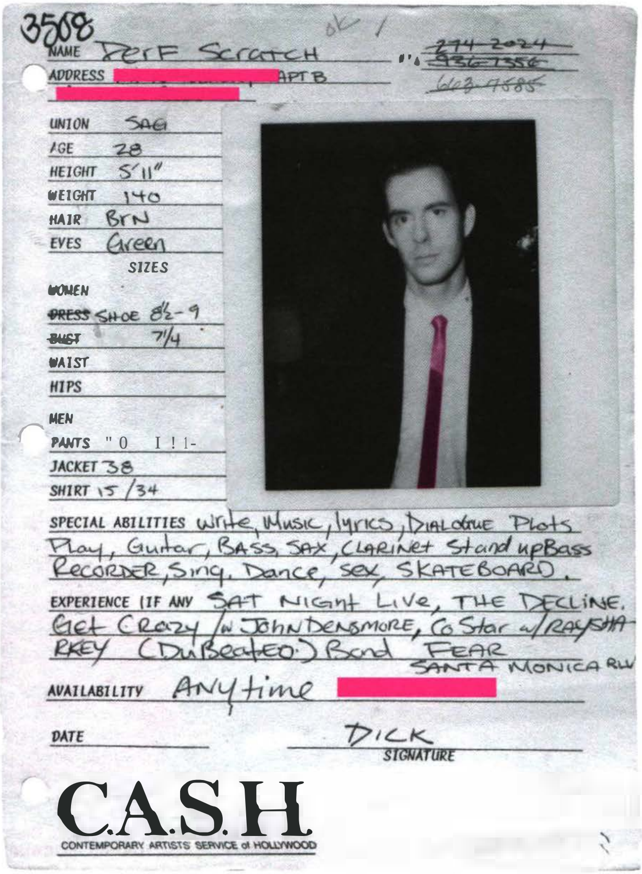
Derf Scratch had a lot of great ideas. Derf could have been a great actor, but he just never pursued it. He did an incredible job. I mean, he never acted before and what you saw on screen wasn't his real personality at all. Ray Sharkey is gone now, but he got an incredible review in the *LA Weekly*. They said, "It was the performance of his life." I knew Ray from back in Brooklyn. So many of those people are gone; El Duce, Spider, who was laying in the bed at the end; Hester, Duce, all these people died too early.

How much of the final film came straight from the original project, from before you came in?

The film you see is all from after I got involved. The only thing outside of that is the Joan Jett footage. Johanna Went was in the movie, and was a great performance artist, a genius. She had someone that she worked with that would get her the props and intestines and design the staging for her act. I met him through the film, and his name was George DiCaprio...yeah, Leo's father. He introduced me to Gary Panter, because George was a comic book distributor. Panter contributed his art for free. He didn't get paid, I didn't get paid: nobody got paid. But we had Gary's stuff and he also introduced me to Ed Culver, who gave me all of his photos to include. And he shot some new stills, including some with El Duce and the, uh, ladies he was with.

When everything was wrapped up, what did you do with it?

The film evoked a lot of reaction. It's hard to look at today. I don't think I could show it to my 15-year-old daughter. We went to every film festival in the world. I flew with Penelope Spheeris to the Munich Film Festival: it played at Cannes, the Chicago festival. In Germany, kids were burning themselves. It was really weird. Nobody's immune to it. Some critics found it pretty upsetting: "Demented," "Worst film I've ever seen," y'know.



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NAME Derf Scratch ~~274-2024~~ ~~936-7356~~ ~~663-7585~~

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JACKET 38

SHIRT 15/34

SPECIAL ABILITIES Write, Music, lyrics, Dialogue Plots Play, Guitar, Bass, Sax, Clarinet Stand up Bass Recorder, Sing, Dance, sex, Skateboard.

EXPERIENCE (IF ANY SAT NIGHT LIVE, THE DECLINE, Get Crazy /w John Densmore, Co Star w/ Ray Sharkey (DuBeatEO) Band FEAR

SANTA MONICA BLV

AVAILABILITY Anytime [redacted]

DATE

DICK

SIGNATURE

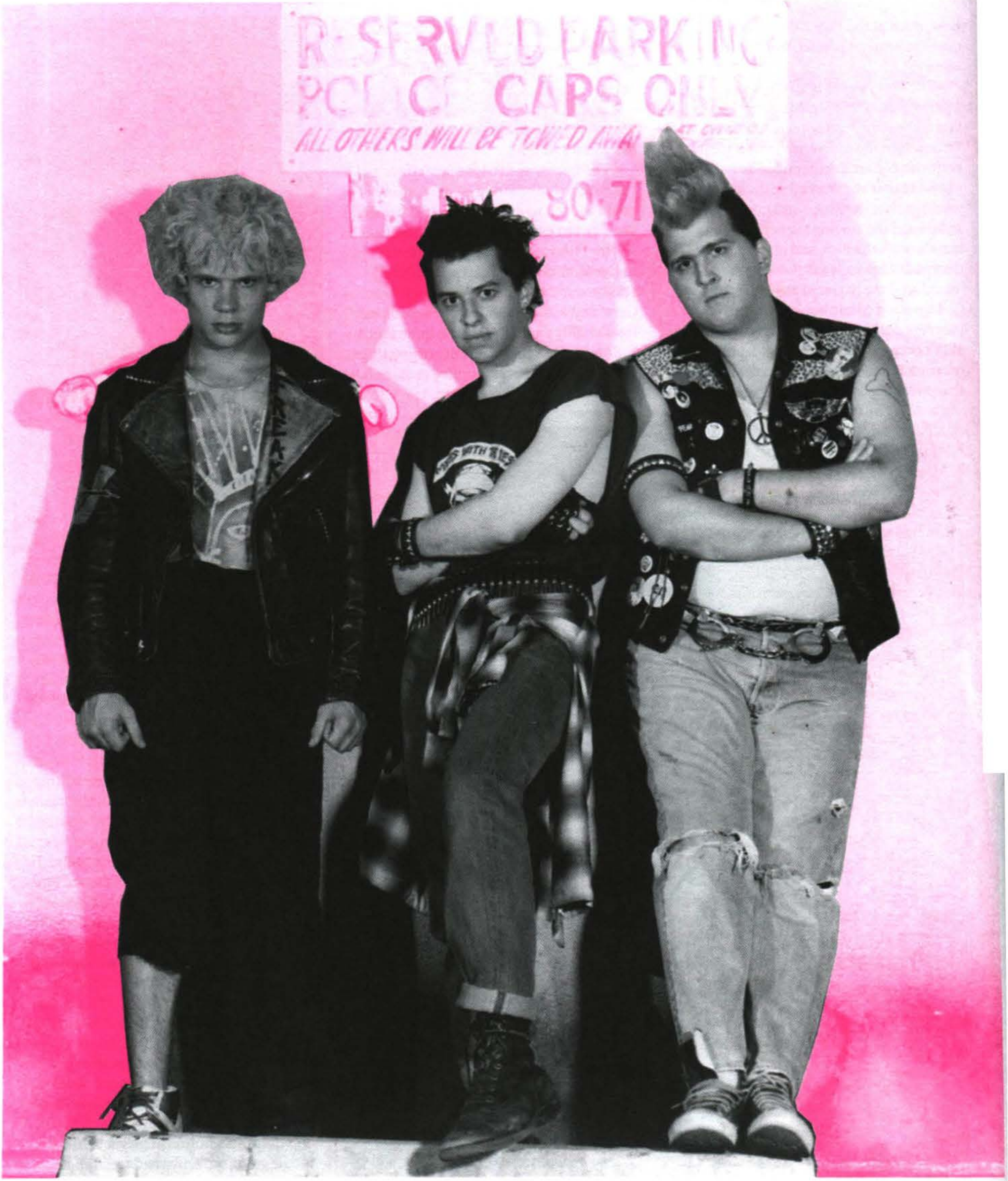
C.A.S.H

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' SERVICE of HOLLYWOOD

There are a lot of things in it that are really repulsive, and that I don't even like. You look at yourself at one period in your life, and 30 years later, you're a different person. I'm definitely not the same person now that I was when I was 15. At the point when I made the movie, I was going through a lot of heavy shit, and I think that was evident. My father had just passed away, and I became very nihilistic and that was all during this time.

But still, there are things in *Du-BEAT-e-o* that I'm very proud of: the editing, for instance. There's a scene where Du-BEAT-e-o goes back through his mind and you see these rapid shots and flashes of moments throughout the movie; this was before digital editing. I was in the editing room for a year doing this! That was really sick [laughs]. I became Du-BEAT-e-o again...I'm making the movie about this obsessive filmmaker and I became him. I even had the editor locked away, and I'm saying, "You've got to finish this!" We'd be doing the same piece over and over again. I didn't have him locked in at gunpoint, but it was close. It was the truth mirroring reality or reality mirroring the truth. It was pretty weird.

Also, the voiceover thing worked. Everything like that in the movie happened because there was a creative hold. That was Derf's idea, and we watched the movie, commenting on it and recording everything we said. Then we lay that in, and there's a whole other layer of the movie going on. And what's really crazy is when you watch the version from Japan, you have Japanese subtitles and then there's suddenly another layer to the thing, which is a complete riot.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"DUDES"
from
NEW CENTURY/VISTA FILM CO.

D-3 (L to R) Milo (**MICHAEL BALZARY**), Grant (**JON CRYER**) and Biscuit (**DANIEL ROEBUCK**) are New York City street kids who find themselves in the murderous and hostile environment of the Old West in the action/thriller, "**DUDES**."

DUDES

Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1987

Two misfits head into the badlands for vengeance.

Spheeris' first punk movie since *Suburbia* somehow ended up an action-packed revenge film, but features enough of her trademarks and style to place it among her best work. Jon Cryer is likeable and uncharacteristically dashing as spiky-haired lead Grant, a New York punk who observes, "Music's fucked, girls are FUCKED...we're fucked." His friends Milo (Flea) and mohawked Biscuit (Daniel Roebuck of *River's Edge*) are of the same opinion after getting their heads stomped at a Vandals show while the group's cowpunk epic "Urban Struggle" plays. The concert is jammed with every conceivable punk style, day-glo red liberty spikes casting jagged shadows against the grafitti on the walls. Afterwards, our heroes correct their sagging hairdos while plotting a move from the NYC armpit to the punk NeverNeverLand of California. Though Grant is skeptical, a run-in with a troublemaking new wave pixie and her leather-bound meathead boyfriend is enough to make him head West.

Their route through the Utah desert proves low on distractions, prompting the trio to perform a headbanging a capella rendition of "Hava Nagila." They camp by firelight and discuss The Go-Go's until they're interrupted by murderous maniac Missoula (Lee Ving) and his biker gang. Ironically, the Fear vocalist plays his part as a bearded, shirtless punk-hater perfectly, especially vibrant when he puts a bullet through Milo's skull. Grant and Biscuit get no help from the local sheriff, who says, "This wouldn't have happened if you looked like normal folk." Rather than take the law's advice and get out of town, Grant decides to track down the man who offed his pal.

It's at this point that the film truly crosses over from colorful road adventure to bullet-ridden revenge fantasy, complete with bloody brawls, fender-bending road rage and airborne automotive stuntwork. After another violent run-in with Missoula, the boys are taken in by attractive ruralite Jessie (Catherine Mary Stewart), who teaches them the finer points of horseback riding and gunplay. With her help—and some divine visions—Biscuit and Grant transform into Western-fashioned heroes. They head out behind the wheel of a dusty pink convertible with steer horns on the grill; the trunk packed with snacks and firearms. A shootout lands the boys in jail opposite the town drunk. Biscuit makes a reference to the Dead Kennedys, to which the wino replies, "The Kennedys are *dead*? What a bummer!" In a shotgun jailbreak finale, scores are settled and desert justice reigns.

Dudes is a considerable step towards the more marketable storytelling Spheeris would employ in her studio work, but is still clearly the product of a filmmaker with an enduring appreciation of punk culture. Beyond the obvious fashion aesthetics of her subjects, Spheeris and writer Randall Jahnson capture the often-overlooked bond between punk kids of the '70s and '80s, making the death of Flea's character all the more tragic. Though the film was made past punk's apex, the movement's mark is clear throughout (Vandals bassist Chalmer Lumary is even credited as a stuntman). Unfortunately, *Dudes* is wrongly overlooked by action movie enthusiasts, '80s nostalgists and fans of Spheeris' other work, doubly frustrating as it's the first and only Western film with punk protagonists. (*ZC*)

THE DWELLING

Dir. Jeffrey Lynn Ward / 1993

A dilapidated slum is secretly used by a sinister cult.

After college-bound Andy bids his old hometown of Spencerville farewell and arrives in the seedy scumbucket that is Los Angeles, he's upset to learn that the apartment he'd been promised has been rented to someone else. This film presents LA as the sort of place where a random stranger with sleazy facial hair and an absurdly flamboyant sense of fashion will approach you while you're on a pay phone and say, "Hi handsome. Want a blow job?" As he sleeps in his car parked in an alley, Andy witnesses a rumble between two flannel-clad street gangs. The only conceivable explanation for what's onscreen is that a posse of irritable lumberjacks is upset with a group of grunge fans. The film quickly moves on, failing to confirm or deny this unlikely scenario. Meanwhile an attractive topless woman finds a mysterious invitation to the Ram's Head Club sitting on her dresser and she goes to see what's cooking. It turns out the Ram's Head is a punk club where the band Police State is performing a song called "Raw Evil." While enjoying the music, she gets grabbed from behind by a mysterious stranger and taken to the back of the club where she's placed in a trance and gets blood rubbed all over her boobs with a chicken foot.

Andy rents a cheap apartment from a sleazy landlord (Burt Ward) and meets his new neighbor Pam (scream queen Michelle Bauer). He's immediately jealous of her cocky boyfriend and when he hears what he thinks is an argument coming from their apartment, he breaks in the door and punches the guy out. It turns out they were only rehearsing a scene for Pam to use in an audition, so Andy once again chooses the least appropriate response and lies to the boyfriend, telling him he suffered a seizure and blacked out. Their apartment building is home to all manner of eerie and unsettling occurrences. At first Andy thinks it might be haunted, but it turns out the landlord is running a satanic cult out of the upstairs apartment and Pam ends up possessed. The cult captures Andy and takes him to the punk club's evil back room, saying, "Let us begin the invocation and the sacrifice of blood!" Andy innocently responds with the wholly insufficient declaration, "I have a bad feeling about this." This movie isn't too bad but it drags in a lot of places, giving you plenty of time to stare at the box art and notice that the title looks like it says "The Dwellin' G," and then imagine the many ways in which that might be a more enjoyable movie. (*TS*)

EAT THE RICH

Dir. Peter Richardson | 1987

A forcibly goofball no-brow class war melodrama that takes the "British comedy" oxymoron to new lows.

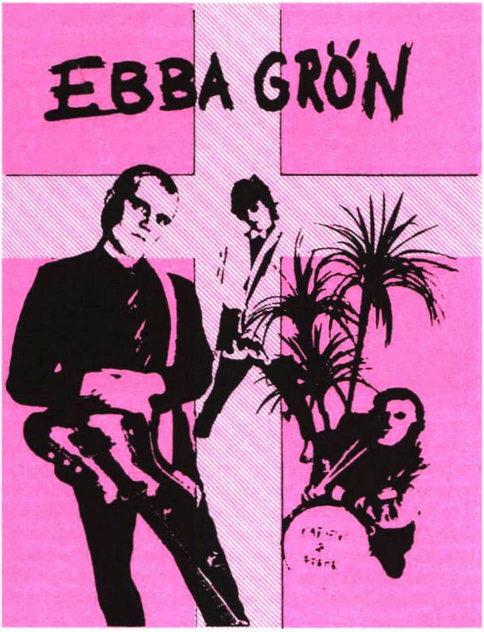
Alex (Lanah Pellay) is black and unemployed, surrounded by wealthy racist turds like the heavyset bar patron in a homemade "I HATE BLACKS" T-shirt. She's inspired when terrorists invade London. One of these freedom fighters is Spider, played by Lemmy Kilmister of Motörhead, who also provide the film's soundtrack. Here, he's the type of good-natured headbanger who specializes in securing foreign military secrets when not performing rock sets at upper-crust parties. When Alex's frustrations erupt in a homicidal spree at the unemployment office, Spider hatches a plan to use her as a pawn to overthrow the government. As part of their coup, the newfound rebel force lays waste to the patrons of England's fanciest restaurant. They rename it "Eat the Rich" and feed human remains to their clientele, which inexplicably includes a bleach-mohawked culinary adventurer. Throw in much lazy sex humor, impotent profanity, elderly fisticuffs and underwear gags and you've got the ideal recipe for sleepy frowns. (*ZC*)

EBBA THE MOVIE

Dir. Johan Danner | 1982

Venerable Swedish punk band Ebba Grön is the subject of an objective exploration of the country's culture, punk and otherwise.

The long-running trio bounces between sweaty gigs, tour vehicles and their living rooms; grinning at their fans or staring sadly out train windows for long stretches without dialogue. The film often feels like a character study rather than a rock documentary, veering stylistically towards The Clash movie *Rude Boy*, only without a fictionalized lead. As a band, Ebba Grön showcases a unique energy and musical style. Though their music is sometimes anthemic to the point of being radio-friendly, their beliefs and rapport with their fans explain their prominence in the Eastern European punk community. The film's most memorable scene features member Joakim Thåström playing an organ in a church while singing the band's original composition "Hang God." (*ZC*)



ECHO PARK

Dir. Robert Dornhelm | 1986

An unusual family is forged by aimless misfit losers.

May (*The Partridge Family's* Susan Dey) is a harried single mom living in LA's painfully bohemian Echo Park district. Saddled with a room to rent, she settles on pizza man/songwriting schmuck Jonathan (an unhealthy-looking Tom "*Amadeus*" Hulce) after working her way through a gauntlet of chubby old ladies and zoned-out new wavers. The most impressive of the latter category is a creatively buzz-cutted cataleptic with a "FUCK THE OLYMPICS" T-shirt. A minimal-impact love triangle emerges between the two housemates and the self-obsessed German bodybuilder-next-door, August (*Valley Girl's* Michael Bowen). Greatest-character-actor-of-all-time Timothy Carey appears in his final screen role as the proprietor of Jonathan's delivery job, and insists that "love is like a pizza."

May eventually picks up a gig doing strip-o-grams and finds herself performing for a man who takes a huge bite out of an ass-shaped birthday cake. Hulce evokes more *Animal House* than *Amadeus* in his frustrated musician character, and the montage of Dey stripping for various men, dogs and retirees must have been a bitter cyanide pill for her career. John Paragon (better known as Jambi on *Pee-wee's Playhouse*) puts in the film's best performance while Cassandra "Elvira" Peterson appears just long enough to shove a large pepperoni pizza in a biker's face. Though the indiscernible plot is a chore, stick it out for Cheech Marin's bit role as a weightlifter (?!) and the deeply bizarre ending. (*ZC*)

EDDIE PRESLEY

Dir. Jeff Burr | 1992

A sad sack invites his friends to see him perform as Elvis.

Based on a one-man play, this low-budget film from the director of *Leatherface: Texas Chainsaw Massacre III* is too meandering to be fun. Actor/writer Duane Whitaker strangely plays it a little too safe here as Eddie. The film goes into some dark places, but his performance does not. Lawrence Tierney does his usual grumbling bark. Daniel Roebuck plays a bumbling magician. The Oscar-deserver here is Daniel Friedman (aka Buddy Daniels). I love this actor, who also played the angry punk skinhead in *Family Reunion*. If you filled the original *Hills Have Eyes*' hairless star Michael Berryman up with helium and multiple pots of coffee, you'd have a close enough idea of what Friedman is like. His hilarious half-second scene as a pissed off homeless man can only be witnessed in the director's cut of this film. Right before this moment of verbal hobo violence, a man with a spiky mohawk can be seen walking down Hollywood Blvd. At the beginning of both versions there is a seemingly endless opening credits sequence. One shot has Eddie walk past a building with "No Loitering" painted in very large letters on it. Below it, two punks sit and smoke. It almost seems as if they were caught unaware and to this day don't realize they're in a forgettable early '90s independent film. Ignorance is bliss. (*BC*)

ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK

Dir James Signorelli | 1988

Horror movie host Elvira inherits a house, cookbook and dog in a small New England town.

An '80s classic! Cassandra Peterson's Elvira character is gloriously showcased here, forever proving that it was the best decade ever for pure fun. Like Mr. T. and Pee-wee Herman, Elvira's popularity skyrocketed far beyond traditional media. Toys, food products, comic books, music and movies all embraced her, and she always appeared to be having fun. Sadly, Pee-wee and T aren't in this movie, but it was co-written by John "Jambi" Paragon, so why complain? This PG-13 flick has more boob and sex jokes than the average Hard R. They aren't entirely regarding Elvira, either. Surprisingly, the most shocking moment comes from perennial mom-type Edie McClurg, who squats over a man's head and asks, "Is this face taken?" Then a hot dog is put in a taco shell and an old lady licks mustard off a man's ear. Raceyyy!

The dog Elvira inherits is named Algonquin. She nicknames him Gonq and gives him a pink mohawk and stud collar. Later, he turns into a rat but retains the hairdo. One gross-out scene has Elvira making a Cheez Whiz, worms and potato chip casserole that then turns into a monster. Seeing Elvira rap at the end gives a *true* feeling of '80s nostalgia that kicks the ass of all *false* '80s nostalgia celebrated by sarcastic teenagers in expensive mall-bought Mötley Crüe T-shirts. (*BC*)

EMERALD CITIES

Dir. Rick Schmidt | 1983

An effective mixture of Bay Area band footage and disjointed character studies.

A homemade multimedia hodgepodge from the underviewed Schmidt. The film is mostly plotless, but the narrative occasionally returns to a young woman named Z who lives with her senile father in a busted Death Valley mobile home. She watches TV incessantly and can only dream of the big city...that is, until a tousled punk (Flipper's Ted Falconi, who co-wrote the script) passes through and whisks her away in his station wagon. Bereft, Z's dad wanders aimlessly in a Santa suit and embarrasses himself with a variety of strangers, many of whom are clearly unaware that they're involved in a movie production.

This is where any structure ends, though there's a consistent Santa theme throughout the picture. An actor posing as a newscaster interviews a mentally disabled man and really shocks him with the news that Santa Claus was recently assassinated. Nuclear war is another, more anticipated thread. Politicians, ex-convicts in alien masks, hypnosis, drug sandwiches and bearded, reluctant cross-dressers all add up to more entertainment than most respectable art films, and *Emerald Cities* also provides a sturdy punk time capsule from early '80s San Francisco. There's a great deal of subtitled green-tinted live footage of Flipper and The Mutants performing, material in line with much of the concert document output from Target Video (who were partly behind this picture as well). The movie was also backed by the NEA and features a segment lensed by indie mainstay Jon Jost. (*ZC*)

COMING TO A REPAIR SHOP NEAR

EMPIRE RECORDS

Dir. Allan Moyle | 1995

A day in the life of a group of brats working at a "hip" record store.

This crappy film aims to trick real-world youngsters into wanting a minimum wage job at a music shop. This was made when kids were going through post-grunge confusion, when everything punk and metal went through the machinery of corporate America, spewing out bland music and expensive clothes into the nation's Hot Topics and Targets. All the characters are embarrassing, obnoxious and have petty problems that we're supposed to care about. Every 20 minutes a "cool" song plays, prompting everyone to sing and dance along. The jokes fall flat and give the feel of a failed sitcom pilot stretched out to 90 minutes. There is, however, a Gwar dream sequence, which even a modern "classic" like *Schindler's List* can't claim. Blink and miss the man with leopard-spotted hair, spiked collar and a (ugh) soul patch rockin' out during the "Damn the Man" party the store throws. A later scene features the fantastic song "LA Girl" by The Adolescents. Tragically, the film also features a conversation about Primus being better than the Misfits by a character who knows everything about Eric Clapton. Liv Tyler rubs her crotch and strips to her underthings, at which point a Robert Palmer-esque singer asks her to eat bleu cheese dressing off his penis. Hooray for the world. (*BC*)

THE EMPTY BEACH

Dir. Chris Thomson | 1985

A Raymond Chandler-scented yawn.

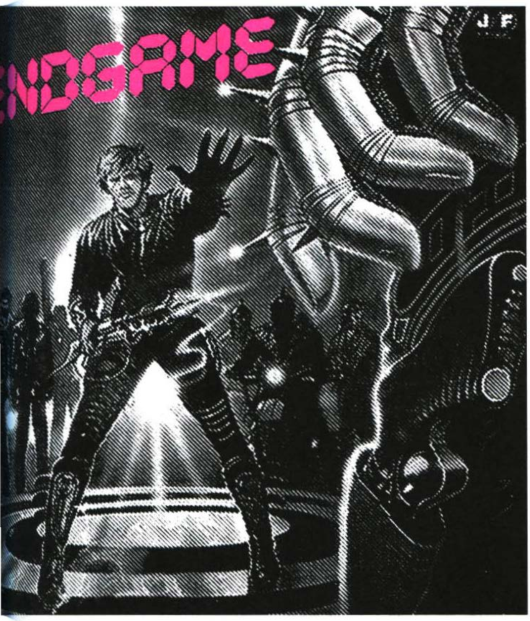
The movie begins and—wait a damn minute—there are people on this "empty" beach! And birds and cars and houses! There are also kids with spikes and mohawks in an arcade. They ask detective Bryan Brown for a match and beat him, but he gives them a swift knuckle sandwich in return. Things get interesting when Brown thumps a man with a board in front of a pooping child. Then it turns weird when Brown is whipped with a belt while being held at gunpoint by a lezbo. This is a lame-ass mystery film with a smooth jazz soundtrack. It's Australian, and since the Aborigines have yet to develop a jazz legacy, it's likely that the score was tootled out by a Caucasian lounge combo, an act punishable by death in more developed countries. (*BC*)

ENCOUNTER AT RAVEN'S GATE

Dir. Rolf de Heer / 1988

Otherworldly influences affect a dusty community.

Eddie, a reasonably punk auto mechanic with a Venom patch on his denim jacket, lives with his uptight brother and sister-in-law on a sheep farm in the Australian wilds. The nearby township Raven's Gate experiences phenomena that make animals dry out and cassettes play without stereos. Eddie dates the welfare-glam bartender at the local saloon, but can't visit her without being fagbashed by the patrons due to his bleached, spiky noggin. Meanwhile, the ETs wreak increasing havoc at some rinky-dink farms: dead birds rain and electrically charged crop circles appear, along with soundwarps, mutilations, zombie hallucinations, animal attacks and more. Anyone who enters the aliens' hideout begins to speak in an echoing digital helium voice. They also r the risk of being possessed by the creatures, and Eddie ends up having to protect himself from a spacedriven-maniac version of his brother. A tense, uneasy, impressive low-budget effort from the director of 1993's notorious ,.)W,'PW *Bubby*. (*ZC*)



ENDGAME

Dir. Joe D'Amato / 1983

The top contestant in a survivalist game show helps
a friendly group of atomic mutants.

In differentiating between '80s Italian post-apocalyptic films, it's best to keep in mind which movies "inspired" the plot (besides GL)W n".)Wm --b"-wWatch). With vx)L.ry)wWprolific director D'Amato borrowed portions of his script from GL)W":FW.x L.-"I:W i.ry)W and r)l)xWr.ryI-.bW (by way of GL)W.Lxfl j)xFW r)l)xcrWt also incorporates story elements that are reminiscent of GL)WxxdxLW h.xWand e"P"T""W..which weren't even rn.t) yet! A Cliver stars as Ron Shannon, the star of popular 2025 TV show kx)L. rn)lWCliver has basically one facial expression, and all the charisma of a junkie Chuck Norris mixed with a wet rag. The show employs a scenario where a human gets hunted for entertainment. Shannon is the all-time undefeated champion prey and is pursued by three hunters, including his arch nemesis Kurt Karnak (George Eastman). As the game gets underway, a crowd of Shannon fans cheer for their hero. They're meant to represent tomorrow's regular folk, and it looks like the future is approximately 1/3 punk—the new wavey, Bowie-haired, mascara-wearing kind—but punk enough to qualify. The rest of the audience is roughly split between bikers, facepainted rockers and people wearing gunnysacks. Laura Gemser (under the pseudonym Moira Chen) plays a psychic mutant named Lilith who convinces Shannon to help protect her band of mutants from fascist government soldiers and devolving humanoids. Yep, Devo was right; the human race is destined for reverse evolution, becoming part monkey and—more surprisingly—part fish. Shannon abandons the TV series and assembles a dream team of future warriors to help Lilith and her pals escape their persecutors and fly away in a helicopter. Along the way, there are a couple of action scenes in rock quarries, a machine-gun attack by a bunch of blind monks, some funny looking "future cars," a telekinetic kid that makes rocks float and, in a scene typical of D'Amato's directorial style, Lilith gets raped by a big, fat, ugly fishman. (*SH*)

ERNEST SAVES CHRISTMAS

Dir. John R. Cherry III / 1988

Ernest saves Christmas.

One of the greatest holiday movies of our time. It's funny and filled with enough bizarre jokes to make it endure through the ages. Jim Varney gives a bravura comedic performance, making one wish he had lived another 50 years and made 20 more v..:FW films. The best gags come and go quickly, such as the part where he burns his hands and cools them off in butter. There's a great scene of Ernest pretending to be a snake handler. He tricks a security guard at a movie studio into thinking the back of his truck is filled with deadly rattlers, but in fact it's Santa Claus shaking maracas under a tarp. Punks can be seen in the police station as Santa gets busted. (BC)

ESCAPE FROM L.A.

Dir. John Carpenter / 1996

Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell) must retrieve a doomsday device
from the hands of an evil leader in a quarantined Los Angeles.

Not a fraction as good as the first entry, but Russell's only screenwriting credit is still entertaining. Carpenter was still very sure-footed as a director and pulls off an '80s film in the '90s. Everyone seems to be having great fun here, and the cast is enough to make any film nerd scream: Steve Buscemi plays a tour guide, Robert Carradine is a skinhead, Bruce Campbell plays an evil plastic surgeon and the beautiful Pam Grier portrays a sexually-reassigned man. The CGI is brutal, but the adventure is nonstop, and even the cheesy tsunami surfing with Peter Fonda will make you triumphantly raise your fists in the a . A scumdog with a large mohawk can be spotted on Sunset Blvd., and a blue-haired biker jeers Plissken as he plays a basketball game to stay alive. Silly and full of the standard, not-so-subtle Carpenter political statements, but well worth a viewing for bonehead action enthusiasts. (BC)

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

Dir. John Carpenter / 1981

A captured criminal is sent into lawless Manhattan to rescue the President of the United States.

It's reassuring to know that even in the distant year of 1997, after all of NYC has been turned into a maximum security prison, there will still be room for goofy pseudo-punk fashion and enough hair gel to keep everyone looking sharp. The futuristic Big Apple that eyepatched Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell) must kick ass across has its fair share of sleazoids, wackos and degenerates, but the character of Romero (Frank Doubleday) is clearly the most punkish of the lot. Content to be little more than a scummy, villainous henchman for the decidedly un-punk Duke (Isaac Hayes), he wanders around looking dingy and vaguely threatening. His hair is three feet high, his taste in music is never brought up in conversation, and his usefulness is extinguished after he stupidly allows Harry Dean Stanton to stick a knife in his belly.

The rest of the 1997 punks are a decidedly unsavory lot. Early on, we see two of 'em passing a zonked-out topless gal back and forth. Weird pastime. Another one of Duke's henchmen is a guy who looks halfway punk, but the other half would be a Jewish dad with an afro. Last but not least is longtime character actor John Diehl, credited here simply as "punk." While the majority of these crumbums are forgettable, the core supporting cast is not. Aside from the names already mentioned, the film features rock-solid performances from Lee Van Cleef, Donald Pleasence, Adrienne Barbeau, Tom Atkins and Oscar-winner Ernest Borgnine as lovable Cabbie. The synthesizer score was composed by Carpenter, and captures the awkward lifelessness of the hollow city. *Escape from New York* was a major success and caught fire overseas, resulting in a boom of imitations. Films like *1990: The Bronx Warriors* and *2019: After the Fall of New York* established *Escape* as a wildly-aped staple of the Fallen World genre, though still a distant second to relentlessly plagiarized classic *The Road Warrior*. (*SW*)

ESCAPE FROM THE BRONX

Dir. Enzo Castellari / 1983

Post-apocalyptic urban warriors fight for their very humanity.

Some very sissified punks are among a group of unwilling Bronx evacuees who've chosen to take a stand. The toughest among them is Trash, who wears a T-shirt depicting a snake writhing through a skull, which matches a similar motif on the front of his motorcycle. If this

isn't enough evidence of Trash's machismo, he shoots a helicopter out of the sky with a pistol in his introductory scene. He returns to his parents' apartment to find they've been blowtorched by government agents. Luckily, their six-foot-tall portrait of their beloved son Trash escapes uncooked. Brokenhearted, he gathers some hard-assed subterraneans together (including Antonio Sabato) to wipe out the extermination squads. This causes a major headache to government "disinfestor" Lloyd Wrangler (the great Henry Silva), and countless plaster models of tenements are blown to beige dust in the name of citywide evacuation. Wrangler's not alone; the villainous CEO behind all this genocide announces that he really hates "this delinquent Trash person!" Later, the glam-futuristic sewerpunks have a huge town hall-style meeting to plan their ultimate defensive strike. Most are dressed like new wave leather daddies, but the Sore Thumb Award is divided between the Chuck Norris-esque shrimp with the eyepatch and the teenage girl in the 1930s cigarette vendor get-up. Things get even more blowtorch-heavy, and Trash continues to exude pure manliness...except when he's called a fag by a 6-year-old boy.

Castellari hustled this sequel to *1990: The Bronx Warriors* out in under one year. This was his third post-WWIII opus in a row, and the tedium was beginning to show. Still, it's an entertaining single-note battleblast, complete with all the misanthropy, blood and hairdos that characterize the genre. The director appears in an uncredited cameo as a radio operator. (*ZC*)

EXTERMINATOR 2

Dir. Mark Buntzman | 1984

Robert Ginty returns as cold-blooded Vietnam vet
The Exterminator, continuing his blowtorch scouring
of the New York streets.

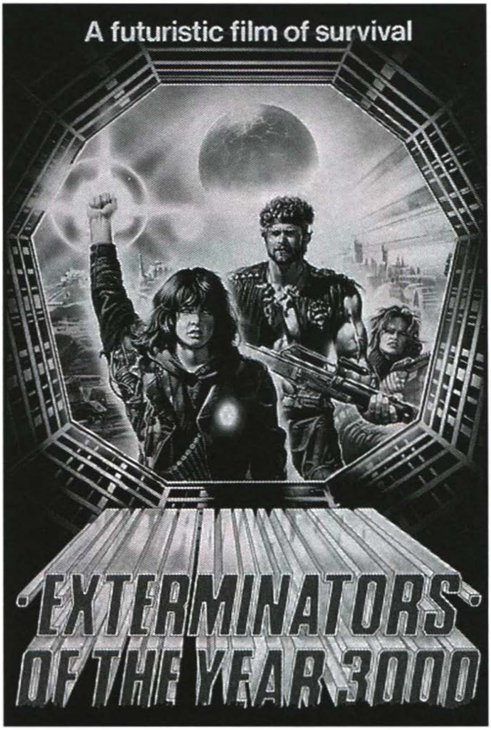
A vicious subterranean gang has been unleashed under the leadership of self-styled gutter god "X" (Mario Van Peebles). For their first major strike, this ambitious crew of slick leather thugs (and a couple of cherry-haired background punks) pillage an armored truck, kill the drivers and blow up a police copter. The Exterminator responds by blasting X's kid brother to a cinder, tearing open an Old Testament-level rage war. Though not nearly as powerful as the first film, all the gritty realities of urban life are unflinchingly displayed here: roller-skate kidnappings, battle-ready garbage trucks, breakdancing contortionists and electric subway crucifixions. (*ZC*)

EXTERMINATORS OF THE YEAR 3000

Dir. Giulliano Carnimeo | 1983

In a future without water, the only hope for a small group
of survivors is a kid with a robot arm who teams with
a scruffy loner on a quest across the desert landscape.

Director Carnimeo (*Ratman*) kicks off his post-nuclear adventure with a sequence that virtually recreates the beginning of the first *Mad Max* film, right down to the slow-motion footage of a car crashing through a trailer. Alien (Robert Jannuci) torments a couple of cops with his souped-up futuristic El Camino (the "Exterminator" of the film's title). He's a loner badass with a silly name, a headband and funny lion heads on the shoulders of his leather jacket. Meanwhile, a small society of survivors makes a last-ditch attempt to find precious water and, in a scene that copies the climactic finale of *Road Warrior*, sends off a convoy of converted tanker trucks and dune buggies that's attacked by a bunch of punkish biker barbarians. These baddies are led by Crazy Bull (looking almost identical to Humungus from the *Road Warrior*), an ugly bald maniac with eye makeup who's prone to spouting Shakespearean quotes sprinkled with PG cussing like, "The Ides of March are on you, you mother!" and "Into battle, my merry mothergrabbers!" In *Road Warrior*, Humungus has an effeminate lackey who gets killed by a boomerang. In *Exterminators*, Crazy Bull has a masculine girlfriend/sidekick with a very punk rock look. Rochelle wears a black leather jacket, cool spiky wristbands, pounds of chains and sports a brutal set of bladed brass knuckles. She lasts through most of the movie and participates in the plot considerably more than her *Road Warrior* counterpart as one of the picture's more sadistic characters. The only survivor of the caravan attack is a kid named Tommy (Venantino Venatini) who has a cybernetic arm. He eventually teams with Alien and they form a tenuous friendship before setting forth on a quest for a mysterious water supply guarded by a bunch of ugly radioactive mutants. Along the way, Tommy gets drunk, Alien reunites with his old girlfriend (named Trash), water is found (then lost and then found again) and there are lots and lots of car chases.



1983 was a banner year for Italian *Road Warrior*-inspired, post-apocalyptic science-fiction "extravaganzas." *Exterminators* probably goes the furthest to ape its Australian inspiration with many of its characters, scenarios and stunts pulled right out of George Miller's classic film series, with very little changed aside from swapping water for petrol. But did *Road Warrior* feature a drunk kid with a bionic arm, a tough punk rock chick with a lethal punch or a Shakespeare-mangling villain? To paraphrase said evildoer: "Methinks not, you mothergrabber." (*SH*)

FAMILY REUNION

Dir. Michael Howes / 1989

The Andrews Family stops off at a ghost town and is fated
to deal with the resident demonic threat.

A low-budget family-in-crisis movie elevated to must-see level by its eccentric characters. Chain-smoking Grandpa Andrews is constantly scared by little Billy, who likes to throw water balloons and fake snakes at the unsuspecting old man. In the car, the family sings Christmas carols. The daughter suggests " L a Virgin." Sarcasm? Or has she been brainwashed by the fakey U2 knock-off tripe playing on her headphones? The plot eventually involves a greasy dude who's been dead for nearly 40 years running around and telepathically controlling doors and cars. Of course, the police chief can't be too involved in these matters since his favorite soaps are on. And why is there a prostitute in the cop station wearing white face paint? The ultimate surprise is video assist. operator/actor Daniel Friedman, as the skinhead with tattooed cheeks. This character wears a anarchy symbol T-shirt and berates the villain by demanding he give up some "butts" and money. When he receives neither, he asks the baddie if he's ever heard of the band Rat's Ass. The answer is no. "You ain't got no dough. You don't smoke. You never heard of Rat's Ass. What planet are you from?!!" Mr. Friedman, I salute you. (*BC*)

DER FAN

aka TRANCE

Dir. Eckhardt Schmidt / 1982

Delusional teenage girl with an obsession with German robo-crap
gets homicidal when rejected by her new wave beau.

I should preface this by saying that -l,TB.xTis one of my favorite films of all time. Former Radio Luxembourg host and future TV star/Falco collaborator Desiree Nosbusch plays an alienated teen whose only emotional attachment is to a new wave star named "R," played by Bodo Staiger. Staiger was also frontman for the real German band Rheingold, who provide the film's synth-based soundtrack ("R" also being the title of one of the band's three LPs). She feverishly writes him letters that go unanswered. Rationalizing his unresponsiveness as a conspiracy to keep them apart, she seeks him out at a local TV station, where he's recording a dreadful video that requires us to hear the same song ad infinitum. Managing to snag his attention, they go back to his minimalist German apartment for some boring, uneventful sex (which nonetheless caused a scandal due to the frequent nudity of its 17-year-old star). When he tries to leave, she gets homicidal and the film gets REAL interesting.

-g,'B.-Twas mostly improvised, but the dialogue is kept to a minimum anyway. Staiger looks like a gay version of Boyd Rice trapped in a bad Kraftwerk video (which his appearance on the T show O')T S')Tis clearly modeled on), but his presence, and the accompanying soundtrack by his band Rheingold, provide the film with its pop culture pedigree (the song "FanFanFanatisch" reached number 2 in the German charts).

The movie is sadly unknown stateside, although it was released on video in Canada (dubbed) under the title O,.x'gwTsubtitled European DVD is available and is well worth seeking out. (*KJ*)

FANCY DANCE

Dir. Mosoyuki Suo / 1989

The lead singer for a ska band has t live the life of
a Buddhist monk so he can inherit a temple.

B -W'A.-,iT tells a familiar tale in a unique environment. Yohei (Masahiro Motoki) is the lead singer for a popular Japanese ska group. I'm not sure what the technical hairstyle term is, but half of his head is shaved; if Yohei looks one direction he has the profile of a handsomely-coiffed young man, but if he turns the other direction he looks like a hard-rocking wildman. Even though modern Japanese ska has a more traditional, laid-back sound, Yohei behaves as if he's the singer for a punk group. During an enthusiastic live performance, he dives into the audience and surfs the crowd. His exciting rock 'n' roll lifestyle is interrupted when he learns he must spend a year at a Buddhist retreat in order to inherit a temple. Soon, Yohei sports a fully-shaved head, and his crazy threads are replaced with a simple robe. Yohei's brother Ikuo (Ken Osawa) also joins what is essentially a Buddhist boot camp. Oh yeah, there's also a comic-relief fat guy.

At first the Monks are strict with the new recruits, and teach them some hard (but sometimes funny) lessons. Eventually Yohei and company modify the rules a bit and do sneaky things like smoke cigarettes and smuggle buckets of Kentucky Fried Chicken inside, and Yohei learns to cherish life at the monastery. At the end of the training, his girlfriend and some pals come to visit. One of his buddies is a nerdy guy who wears a pair of black leather pants with wide suspenders and silver studs, more or less looking like a pair of punk rock lederhosen. (*SH*)

FANGORIA'S WEEKEND OF HORRORS

Dirs. Mike Hadley & Kerry O'Quinn / 1986

A camcorder account of 1985's most rampaging
assemblage of dweebery: LA's Fangoria convention.

Tucked among the fedora-wearing college virgins and Elvira-obsessed, lonely uncles are a handful of punk horror enthusiasts, an alarming number with purple-tipped hair. To up this lovable doc's street cred, ,i8Cl.T'T :9kVHFH-k.fo.TDan O'Bannon, Clu Gulager and Jewel Shepard are interviewed and the film's iconic mohawked zombie poster is shown. New waver/horror effects artist Jennifer Aspinall is unfortunately given minimal screen time, but late, great godfather of horror fandom Forrest J. Ackerman is on hand to remind us that an obsessive wingnut can reap life's greatest pleasures, as long as said pleasures don't include sex or a respectable income. All this plus a guy in a Bad Brains shirt. t),mT

FAR OUT, MAN

Dir. Tommy Chong / 1990

A goofball drug casualty embarks on an aimless quest.

Tommy Chong plays/is the ultimate burnout in pursuit of his lost dreams. No joke in this celluloid barfbag aims above urinal level, and the cast of faded celebrities—Martin Mull, C. Thomas Howell, Paul Bartel, a slumming Cheech Marin, four individual Chongs and oral sound effects master Michael Winslow (playing a policeman who does oral sound effects)—makes the tragedy all the more palpable. Even the most talented *Police Academy* alumnus can't hope to salvage a film that contains an animated scene featuring a rap song about a flying penis. At a hotel party, a spiked leathergirl with green bangs disrobes and climbs in a tub with Chong. No doubt this actress was found dead via a suicide within six months. Fictional punk band The Farts (not to be confused with actual Seattle combo The Fartz) flip off the camera while stereo salesmen in denim jackets do some low-impact slamming. As the false Farts flub punk mayhem, an audience member states that they're the loudest band in the world, but even a goddamn Eskimo knows that Manowar holds that title. So fuck this movie. (*ZC*)

FAST FORWARD

Dir. Sidney Poitier / 1985

Eight ambitious singing, prancing teens from Sandusky, Ohio venture to New York to battle spandexed gangs and become the greatest modern dance troupe of all time.

Brought to you by the acclaimed director of *Ghost Dad*, this film is a helpful glimpse into Mr. Poitier's unique sense of reality and—perhaps—your soul. Things start with a ten-minute montage of dancers suiting up, and some last-minute rehearsal of the group's single "Survive"—in the first of several times the number will be performed throughout the picture. We meet John Scott Clough's wicked perm, the only thing that makes him watchable as Matt Sherman, male lead and whitest man who ever danced.

Immediately after stepping off the bus in NYC, our youngsters stumble upon their new rivals; a gang of passionate, street-dancing escaped mental patients headed by Caesar Lopez (Michael DeLorenzo from *New York Undercover*). The gang isn't so much punk, although they've seemed to incorporate it somewhere into their vast collection of poor fashion choices. In my mind, they just got cut from the "Beat It" video and are taking it out on the general public. The two crews finally battle it out at N.Y.'s hippest dance club, The Zoo, which is inexplicably filled to the brim with an assortment of '80s fashion-driven subcultures, including quite a few disco-lovin' punks. Caesar's main henchman spots the Ohioans and tears the boss away from his game of arcade "Super Bagman" to rally the troops with a snap of his furious fingers. A group of young punks convulses and falls on each other and an old-lady punk with tall white liberty spikes swings a feather boa, but the club's scene-stealer is a huge man with dreadlocks in what looks to be a professional wrestling costume, high-kicking in front of the camera. After a slight struggle and a nunchuck demonstration, Caesar totally shuts down dancer Michael (Don Franklin from *Seaquest*). This leads the group to a total revamping of their style. Montage ensues.

A dead record producer's wife sneaks the group into the *Shoot Out* (a *Star Search*-esque affair) by disguising herself as a glitzy new waver, but looks more like she lost a fight with a glass of Kool-Aid. If emasculated acrobatics, leg warmers and misguided interpretations of "what kids are into nowadays" sounds like your idea of a good time, then *jam it*!!! (*BLB*)

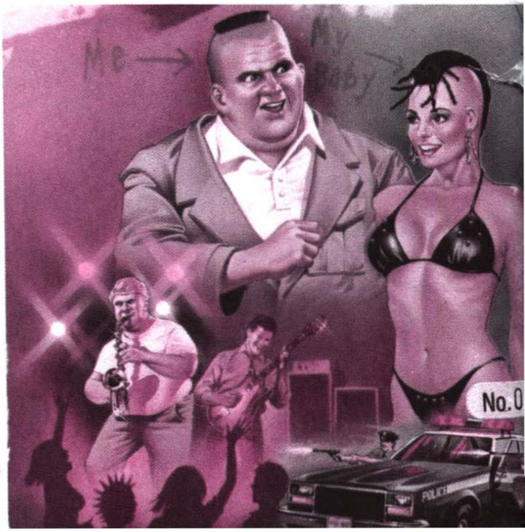
FAT GUY GOES NUTZOID

aka ZEISTERS!

Dir. John Golden / 1986

Fat guy goes mildly askew.

A promising title leads to disappointment as we merely get whiny little New Yorkers chasing after an escaped mental patient. Don't be fooled by the Troma logo; this is nothing like their other films. The only gross-out scene is the fat guy vomiting. No nudity. No gore. No fun. This film is basically a welfare version of *Rain Man*, which sounds great, but isn't. The fat guy of the title is mentally disabled and dances with a mohawked punk girl. She hopefully lost street cred with her friends for having dreadlocked bangs as well as appearing in this shitbuster. (*BC*)



FATAL BEAUTY

Dir. Tom Holland | 1987

Whoopi Goldberg vs. the Los Angeles narcotics industry.

Goldberg plays Rizzoli, a two-fisted Italian cop who's able to bend men to her will using sheer sex appeal. Surprisingly, this title is filed under ACTION rather than SCI-FI, which is all the more confusing considering the crimefighting is scant at best. Sure, we see an obese junkie march into a hail of police gunfire. Yeah, we witness a man executed for beating a strung-out prostitute. We get a naked, giggling cocaine manufacturer taking the business end of an uzi. And, between these surprisingly grisly sequences, there's even a walk-on from a street rebel with foot-tall liberty spikes. In a bombed out, heavily guarded section of LA drug territory, cholos, metalheads and several new wavers break social barriers to trudge alongside one another in a drugged haze. Later, a bodyguard intimidates a bleached, sissified faux musclepunk by chewing the top off a glass bottle and spitting the shards in a wine glass.

But for all of *Fatal Beauty*'s strained machismo and stellar casting (including John Ryan, James LeGros, Brad Dourif and Sam Elliott as Rizzoli's unlikely squeeze), there's not much to get your pulse going. Unless, like everyone else in the movie, you're turned on by the sight of Whoopi Goldberg in baggy sweatpants. (ZC)

FATAL FIX

aka HEROIN aka THE TUNNEL

Dir. Massimo Pirri | 1980

Italy's heroin culture seen through the lives of two young lovers.

The urban alleys of 1980 Italy are peppered with graffiti reading "SID VICIOUS" and "DESTROY." Poodle-permed leather punks hang out in the local pharmacy. Happy-go-lucky junkie couple Pina and Marco (Corinne Clery and Helmut Berger) spend the summer days discussing spoon quality and graphically shooting up at their dealer's pad, and the camera doesn't shy away when she lifts her skirt to inject beside her lady area. Both she and Marco have sex with men to afford their next fix. Pina meets 14-year-old addict Angelo, who tells her he'll give her a dose if she'll have sex with him. These heart-wrenching tragedies strike again and again until the closing credits roll.

The film features a great deal of arguing, petty crime and fruitless schemes, but overall maintains an even, realistic pace that belies the trashy subject matter and presents the couple's situation somewhat respectably; refreshingly glamourless, as opposed to later works in the genre like *Trainspotting* or even *Requiem for a Dream*. Clery surprisingly took this role at the height of her career, having just appeared in *Moonraker* for MGM. But Berger took a more courageous leap, as just a couple years prior to filming, he had endured a great deal of publicity regarding his own problem with substance abuse. (ZC)

FEAR, ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

Dir. Todd Solondz | 1989

Dating is difficult for neurotic, talentless artists.

The strange tale of a Woody Allen-esque manboy named Ira (writer/director Solondz) who wants to be the next Beckett, except his plays suck. His friend Jack is an artist whose paintings are minimalist large black canvases, with phrases like "This is Not a Painting" scrawled around the outer edge. Ira decides to put all his money on his arguable talent and produces a play titled *Despair*, which is universally dumped on by everyone. Still, Ira manages to attract an oddly schlubby girlfriend named Sharon who sings songs of her love for him, but his eye wanders and he becomes obsessed with a nouveau punk performance artist who goes by the name of Junk.

He goes through several ups and downs trying to break things off with Sharon, simultaneously struggling to get in the pants of the self-obsessed artist. He takes his friend Jack to see Junk's performance at Club Cairo, and Ira makes the mistake of introducing the world's two most self-obsessed and morally vacant people to each other. Love blooms. Poor Ira; it seems he spends most of the film chasing the wrong girls at the wrongs times, and coming to great epiphanies when it's too late. The cast endures endless comic mishaps but the real star of the film is New York itself, before Giuliani got his hands on it and turned into a white picket city. (*JH*)

FEDS

Dir. Daniel Goldberg | 1988

Two female FBI recruits prove their mettle.

Rebecca De Mornay and gawky physical comic Mary Gross star as tough-talkin' De Witt and timid nerd Zuckerman, mismatched government agent trainees who team up to earn their badges. That's the entire plot. But what's missing in the film's foundation is compensated for in a few brilliant flashes. A fat punker bangs his head against a wall to the beat of the Circle Jerks while dreary-eyed nigh-mutant rockers wander a club in a daze. Zuckerman learns to kick men in the nuts before arresting them. She later gets drunk in a seedy bar and asks a sailor if he's ever "made love to a woman until she lost consciousness." Prudishness obliterated, she lifts his shirt and massages his nipples before doing an impressive faceplant on the corner table. But *Feds*' high point is inarguably the gruff male mugger wearing a pink "RUDE GIRL" tank top who tries to steal our heroes' watches. For chrissakes, give that man an Oscar. (ZC)

FEEL THE MOTION

Dir. Wolfgang Büld | 1985

The wild hijinks of broadcast rock.

Punk documentarian Büld's lighthearted German new wave narrative follows the zany antics at a music TV station. Various bands pop in to perform their hits, including glamour-dance debutantes The Flirts and the walking hairdo rainbow that is Die Toten Hosen (whose name translates to "The Dead Pants").

Auto mechanic Tina (Sissy Kelling, who co-directed *Berlin Now* with Büld the same year) has dreams of airwave stardom, and catches the attention of the studio heads with her demo cassette.

Meat Loaf shows up to perform a song and blowdry Tina's hair, and Pia Zadora deepens the befuddling impossibility of her fame. It's Falco who tears the roof off with a shockingly vein-bulging version of his international hit "Rock Me Amadeus." That's the extent of the celebrity cameos, unless you count the Rockbiter puppet from *The Neverending Story*.

The only punks onscreen, Die Toten Hosen (who are still together today) are also the comic relief, bumping into glass doors, fumbling through countless costume changes and making moms faint with their generally gaudy schtick. They also provide cinema's first punk weightlifting montage. Unable to improve their image by beefing up, the boys opt to arrive for their TV appearance in blackface. (*ZC*)

FIGHT CLUB

Dir David Fincher / 1999

Amélie for dudes.

The Narrator (Edward Norton's actual onscreen credit) hates his life. He deals with his misery by hopping between nightly support groups for the terminally ill like some sort of malingering Sybil. In one of these meetings, the participants are asked to close their eyes and find their subconscious "cave." The Narrator's cave is an arctic simulacrum so silly that you half expect the Coca-Cola polar bears to waddle over and offer him a soda. But, instead of turning to respectable solutions like sterilization, lobotomy or suicide, he joins forces with Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt), and they rise up against the corporate machinery by refusing to watch TV or wash their clothes. And they fight, but don't talk about it.

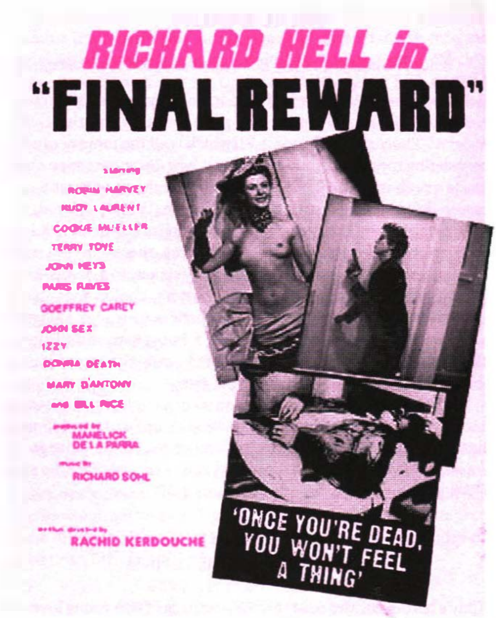
The whole mess is basically an anti-consumerist/pro-bro firewalking seminar set to electronic slide whistles and rumbling bass. In the final seconds of the film—right after a tender thug with a landing-strip mohawk finds The Narrator nursing a bullet-mangled gill that's flapping off of his throat—you can see a single frame of an erect penis. If you added a Starbucks logo to that penis, it'd be the same as watching the whole movie. The only thing you'd miss is a switcheroo plot twist that's only believable if you were born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. (*LAF*)

FILM HOUSE FEVER

Dir. Domonic Paris / 1986

Two goons (Steve Buscemi and Mark Boone Jr.)
watch some movie trailers.

A surprisingly entertaining hour of nothing. At the dawn of their careers, Buscemi and Boone ended up playing the lead—and only—roles in this collection of trailers and clips from '60s-'80s horror/exploitation films. The segments are linked together with comic bits of the two viewers staring wide-eyed at the movie screen, fumbling their popcorn and making dippy comments. Most of the footage is from Herschell Gordon Lewis films, and there's a long (and very funny) portion from a pre-*Evil Dead* Sam Raimi/Bruce Campbell collaboration *Waders of the Lost Park*. The selections seem arbitrary, ranging from *Steel Arena* to *Rocktober Blood*, with an unexpected scene from ultimate punk epic *Suburbia* tossed in for good measure. This is the only punk moment in *Film House Fever*, though it should be noted that the VHS box features a drawing of a blond-mohawked youth in a sleeveless T-shirt and Devo glasses. Buscemi probably has recurring nightmares that this forgotten effort gets released on DVD...or someone writes about it in a book. (*ZC*)



FINAL REWARD

Dir. Rachid Kerdouche / 1978

Amateur criminal masterminds face cold reality.

Crash (Richard Hell) drifts back into New York after a long absence, reacquainting with old friends and bad influences. He joins the latter at a mid-scale primordially punk disco, and forms a group of associates to plot a heist. The club's employees are corrupt themselves, trading drugs to cops and beating lesser criminals (including performance artist John Sex) for information on Crash's dealings. In celebration of their plan's success—or maybe in a fit of self-loathing—Crash engages in a frenzied sado-maso coupling with a woman from the street (Cookie Mueller). He's made aware of their pursuers when his cohort's girlfriend is murdered, and the men hole up to work out their next move, eventually striking out with a gun and no plan.

Kerdouche states he completed this punk noir for only $2000, successfully executing a strong 16mm black-and-white crime story. A dimly lit, shoestring Jean-Pierre Melville adventure ably piloted by Hell, Mueller, Bill Rice and other members of NY's limited-means cinema scene, the film deserves more attention than it's received. (*ZC*)

FINAL RINSE

Dir Robert D Tucker / 1999

A hardboiled cop investigates a series of murders
at a rock 'n' roll nightclub.

By the end of the 20th century, the once-heated rivalry between punk rockers and hard rockers had mellowed. Definitions and styles had changed and even intermixed. Countless punk bands "went metal" and lots of metal bands started churning out semi-hardcore songs. And let's not forget how much both sides l-u-v studded black leather chokers. The '90s can also boast that whole "alternative rock" thing invented by the music industry, causing distinctions to be blurred even further and setting the stage for a final showdown between rockers and hippies. Or at least that's how things work in my personal rock 'n' roll apocalypse scenario. And I can now submit an amusing hippie vs. rocker parable called *Final Rinse* as evidence.

A longhaired serial killer with pantyhose on his head is murdering patrons of a New York City rocker bar called The Ultra Club. The killer is named Trojan; he quotes lyrics from classic rock tunes, has huge shiny scissors and dispatches victims with stabs and a haircut. A *Dirty Harry*-style cop named Max Block (Terence Goodman) goes undercover at the club as wig-wearing bouncer. Block suffers from occasional acid flashbacks and eventually identifies Trojan as a dirty, good-for-nuthin' hippie with a hair fetish from his bohemian past. Intermixed with the investigation are several live performances at the club, all emceed by none other than Joey Ramone. At one point Joey exclaims, "Why can't we all just get along?" Later, he laughs hysterically at a guy in the bathroom, points his finger and says, "Punk rock, man!" Some of the bands featured are The Dictators (who play the tune "Who Will Save Rock and Roll?" from album *D.F.F.D.* that wasn't released until two years later) and The Last Hard Men, an obscure "alternative rock" super group that featured Kelley Deal, Jimmy Flemion from The Frogs, the drummer from The Smashing Pumpkins and Sebastian Bach! Bach also plays a supporting role as a buddy of the club's owner. The film is a mostly functional crime parody with lots of rock 'n' roll references, Frank Gorshin as the gruff chief of police, inspired performances, an unfunny cameo by Uncle Floyd, hair gel jokes, a minor character named J. Frank Parnell and another named Torgo Manos. In other words, there are plenty of pop culture treats, obscure references and even a prophetic subtext packed into *Final Rinse*. (*SH*)

FIREHOUSE

Dir. J. Christian Ingvardsen / 1987

Three ladies join the fire department with sexy results.

Why would somebody make a comedy that isn't funny? Say what you will about the *Police Academy* series: at least those films had memorable characters and jokes that made sense. The laughs don't keep a-comin' when one of your "crazy" leads does a John Wayne impression. The major comedic problem with this film is that no matter how you try to get around it, burning buildings aren't funny. Cop comedies work because you can have zany situations with robberies or jaywalking and never have to deal with a single murder. Firemen strictly put out fires. So to make a comedy about them is to make light of people's homes being destroyed.

The Art of the Random Punk is on display here during a dinner scene at an Irish-American family's apartment. As everyone sits arguing, in walks a dude with a huge fauxhawk. He wears a flannel shirt with the sleeves ripped off, sits quietly at the table and prepares for vittles. There's a gang of thugs where one member mixes new wave style into his wardrobe. He wears black-and-white robo-chic glasses and has a jacket emblazoned with a spiky-haired skull and the words "Savage Crew." The film's attempts at working in nudity are shameless. Example: the firehouse just happens to share a wall with an "African Boogie Tribe," where topless white ladies dance in leaf skirts. (*BC*)

FIREPOWER

Dir. Richard Pepin / 1993

The future is even worse.

Los Angeles in the distant year 2006: As an effort to eliminate petty crime, the government has dumped all junkies, hookers and other undesirables into a single lawless sector known as "Hellzone." Criminal overlord The Swordsman (played by former WWF Ultimate Warrior Jim Hellwig) is busted out of an LAPD holding cell by his gang, which includes one mohawked gunman and another dressed for a studs-n-leather space circus. After the siege, fearless cops Daryn (Hollywood heir Chad McQueen) and Sledge (British kickboxing dandy Gary Daniels) have no choice but to enter Hellzone and bring The Swordsman to justice.

As expected, the police-free area is crawling with transvestite bikers, tattooed faces and dancing bondage punks ("Can I lick your helmet, officer?"), and even one steely-eyed character who meets the criteria for all three. Recreation in Hellzone centers around combat arena The Death Ring, where locals gather to cheer on lethal celebrities like Dr. Death and The Gorgon.

The film was completed by the prolific production team of Joseph Merhi and Richard Pepin, two ground-level Hollywood action churners responsible for countless straight-to-video cop-on-a-rampage releases. Of their wide array of Cannon Films-aping material, this sci-fi muscle fantasy is among the very best. (*ZC*)

THE FISHMEN AND THEIR QUEEN

Dir. Sergio Martino / 1995

In the radiation-choked world of tomorrow,
there are some fishmen. Also, they have a queen.

The year is 2042. Mankind struggles for survival in an urban wasteland. The denizens of New York have been reduced to rat-eating subterranean hobos. Adolescent boys Sam and Tom dream of escape while getting drunk in the back of a spike-laden station wagon. To their surprise, the vehicle belongs to a demolition derby driver, and the boys are accidentally shanghaied for a four-wheeled death match. The cheering "crowd" consists of six hooting, fist-pumping punks. Luckily, the station wagon wins, and the driver turns out to be a fairly friendly guy. He takes the boys on a daring escape ride through a maze of laser-tipped road cones. Tragedy strikes, their rescuer is reduced to a slimy, steaming skull, and the boys find themselves running free along a sandy beach. When they discover there is no delicious furry vermin in the ocean, they nearly opt to return to sewer life. This changes when they're barked at by a dog which they mistake for a "giant rat." The pooch belongs to Socrates, a colorful old beachcomber who fries fish guts on a garbage lid. He tells them of a magical island across the sea and the three of them drink hallucinogenic bluish-green lizard extract and set out in search of the mythical Shangri-La. En route, they experience visions of the Fish Queen. Socrates' artificial heart fails and he's dead by the time they reach their destination. Rather than mourn, the boys strip down to loincloths and take the dog swimming. Their clothes are stolen by Selba, a jungle girl who tries to wear their jeans on her head. They chase her and run across a platoon of fierce warrior women. Another resident of the island is Pegaso, a horribly scarred, mute, amphibious dwarf in a solid-gold Incan mask. He likes to hang out in a damp cave and rub people's faces. Years ago, his girlfriend was transformed into a wooden statue. Selba takes Sam and Tom on an aquatic tour of Atlantis' ruins, where fishmen (finally!) swim dreamily and gather sunken artifacts for their heartless ruler. She orders one of her subjects to take a bite from a mystic apple and he turns into a frog.

At this point, I'd like to mention that we're only halfway into the film. A great deal more happens: the youths are imprisoned, Pegaso revives Socrates with a wave of his scaly hand, fishmen slump around to the no-good queen's telepathic commands and so on. Sergio Martino really knows how to pack in the half-baked ideas, and probably broke some kind of record here. *The Fishmen and their Queen* was a long-unawaited made-for-TV sequel to his 1979 feature *Island of the Fishmen* (released in the U.S. and other territories as *Screamers*), but features none of the same characters or concepts. In fact, the most consistent aspect between the two films is the production quality; there's nothing in the second installment that indicates it was made more than a day after its predecessor. Lighting is yellowish and inadequate, the "futuristic" segments are more cardboard than chrome, and vaguely electronic carnival music tweedles and dwinks throughout. More like Filipino exploitation films than Italian, the sets, costumes and film stock seem to exist in a pre-'80s purgatory, with only the occasional glimpse of more modern aesthetics to hint at the reality. Martino had been helming cheapos like this since the start of the '70s, and I applaud him for choosing to not advance along with the current filmmaking fashions. Instead, he courageously opts to reuse footage from his own tried-and-true earlier works like *2019: After the Fall of New York*. If it's broke, don't fix it. (*ZC*)

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

Dir. Tony Randel / 1995

A hero must fight a villain
to save some people.

A live-action martial arts fantasy with surprisingly high production values considering that the plot and ideas shout straight-to-video. The only reason this movie works is the villains. Chris Penn shows up with his head strapped in leather. He's got rotten teeth, a scabby face and shouts, "It ain't easy being sleazy," after a village has been burned, the inhabitants killed and the women raped. Don't bring the kids (or at least cover their eyes with leather straps) when the head baddie's hand glows and he punches a hole through a man's body. Clint Howard appears in a Chairman Mao outfit and shoots at the innocent. Another thug has a flat mohawk, stud bracelet and necklace, plus "SS" tattooed on his forehead. He gets kicked in the face and his jaw dislocates. Melvin Van Peebles and Downtown Julie Brown try to make a little mid-'90s cash here as well. (*BC*)

THE FLASH

Dir. Rober Iscove / 1990

Barry Allen is the victim of a laboratory mishap that
gives him the ability to run really fast.

Riding the doomed wave of Tim Burton's first *Batman* film (right down to the opening theme by Danny Elfman), this made-for-TV movie pales in comparison to even the lesser *Batman* sequels. For a guy with such speed, this film has a lot of down time (wacky antics via a dog) and it doesn't help that The Flash is a one-note superhero. He runs quick. That's it. Superman has several powers. The Flash can do real time reenactments of Benny Hill bits. There's an intense scene where he cleans his apartment quickly. Superheroes with one special trait work well in teams (X-Men, Fantastic Four), but alone they tend to wear out their welcome, which explains why the television series that followed this pilot didn't last very long. This movie also unfortunately features the worst invention of the '90s: movie punks with goatees. Here we have one with a greasy mohawk. He's a member of biker baddies The Dark Riders, who can also claim a longhaired dude with colored bangs and a girl with green hair. Tim Thomerson holds his own as The Flash's brother, and his *Trancers* sidekick Biff Manard plays a wisecracking cop. (*BC*)

FLASH FUTURE KUNG FU

aka HEALTH WARNING

Dir. Kirk Wong / 1982

Kung fu punks vs. kung fu skinheads while bored
new wave girls get high on car exhaust!

This is one of the very few Hong Kong martial arts entries in the punksploitation sweepstakes and it's totally flipped out. Directed by Kirk Wong (Jackie Chan's *Crime Story* and Mark Wahlberg's *The Big Hit*), this sci-fi Chopsocky takes place in a burnt-out, futuristic HK slum. The stale old standby plot of warring martial arts schools starts the story off, but gets refreshingly bent from there. Dumb-as-bricks hero Killer is instructed by Master Lau to train by chopping down trees. In one jaw-dropping scene, the idiot proceeds to hack down an entire forest. Being that this is some kind of post-apocalypse setup, I'm sure Killer just destroyed the last remaining patch of green in mainland China. Later, this Arbor Day poster child and his friend meet up with a pair of new wave hookers for a good time, except their idea of a good time is sitting in second-rate *Mad Max* mobiles with a tube hooked up to the exhaust and the windows rolled up. "You've got to learn how to enjoy life," drones one of the skanks as the car becomes a billowing cloud of asphyxia.

The movie's most debauched scenes take place in a club where "Ms. Pac Man" machines and rusted jungle gyms pass for futuristic décor. A group musical number includes a No Wave pidgin English version of Velvet Underground's "Venus in Furs," while girls with jackets and bare bottoms look on in a stupor. Another night features a Devo-style band in construction helmets and lab coats. During their set, a girl in a leopard leotard is whipped by others in pink tutus, only to be finished off by drowning in a giant fish tank. Other martial madness includes girls having sex with a guy while poisoning him with snake venom and syringes being used as throwing stars. It all culminates in a final battle with Killer taking on an army of bondage-masked androids and the Jim Jones-inspired Master of the Skinheads. "The power of the body is superior to the mind. Brute force is precious. The individual is subordinate to the masses." These are just a few of the golden nuggets this bargain-basement Big Brother imparts to his followers. Killer and the master race mastermind face off in a boxing ring with a swastika flag draped in the background.

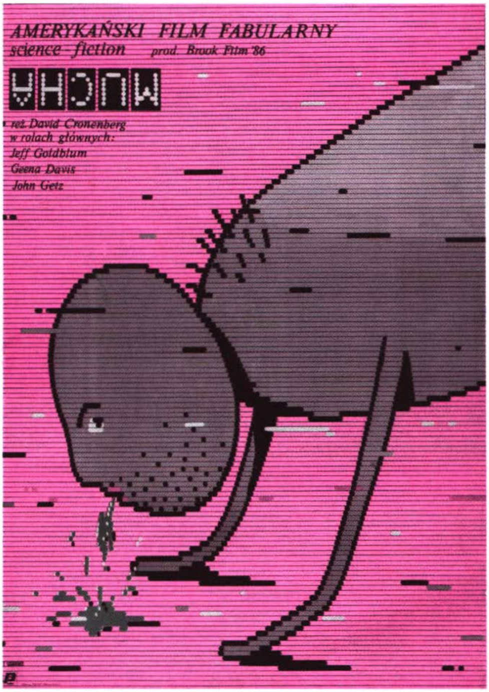
[illegible] is a truly demented shlockfest well worth you time, but there is one letdown. On the VHS box, it claims there is a "now classic" boxing scene between man and kangaroo. This does not happen. No such scene exists in this movie. [illegible] the deluxe two-disc director's cut DVD edition, anyone? (*JS*)

FLICKS

Dirs. Peter Winograd & Kirk Henderson / 1987

A movie that's less funny than the movies it parodies.

A humor anthology with high production values, top-notch special effects and less laughs than a urology clinic. Martin Mull stars in a slasher satire, Richard Belzer plays a drug-addled space janitor and a sleeveless punk makes the Hollywood nightclub scene while a trench-coated insectopoid investigates an intergalactic laser-running game in segment [illegible]-Like [illegible] Ha ha! See that joke there? If this type of thing satisfies your need for entertainment, you can pocket the cost of a rental and go watch homeless men cry in an alley. (*ZC*)



THE FLY

Dir. David Cronenberg / 1986

Love and science don't mix in this contemporary Grimm-like tale of technology gone wrong.

[illegible] is one of my absolute favorite love stories and classic Cronenberg, replete with fantastical and repugnant physical horror as a visual barometer for the agonizing/transformative conflict to which the protagonist is being internally subjected. In homage to (and expanding extensively from) the original [illegible] movie starring Vincent Price, Cronenberg infuses the metamorphosis from man to monster with a compassionate allusion to the AIDS epidemic that was just beginning to be fully understood at the time of the film's creation.

Reclusive and brilliant inventor Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) meets beautiful journalist Veronica (Geena Davis) at a science convention. As he confides in her, sharing the development progress of his latest and proudest technological accomplishment—matter transmission pods that could revolutionize future travel—they begin to fall in love. Davis and Goldblum were actually dating at the time, their familiarity with one another clearly lending plausibility to their rapid onscreen romance. Following an excited conversation at a deli—where we begin to see evidence of Brundle's DNA merging with the fly's—he and Veronica walk past a couple of punks wearing spiked, patched black leather jackets and sporting hawked 'dos.

Seth Brundle has to [illegible] Jeff Goldblum's finest role. He is allowed to exhibit a range of emotions and behaviors that are filtered through his signature idiosyncrasies; it's difficult to say who else could have brought such an amazing array of physical, humorous and emotive attributes to the performance. Interestingly, the producers did not want to see Goldblum in the lead role, but fortunately for all, they ultimately assented to Cronenberg's choice. (*BI*)

FOOD OF THE GODS II

Dir. Damian Lee / 1989

Genetic mayhem causes things to grow very large. Again.

A punk appears in the first three seconds of this late-entry Canadian sequel to the botched 1976 H.G. Wells adaptation. The black-maned counterculturist in question is part of a mob of students protesting nefarious lab work at the local university. Specifically, they're animal rights activists, and tolerant to boot, considering their token punk proudly sports a leather jacket while marching to the PETA beat. Not to be outdone, their self-righteous leader wears a cow mask.

Meanwhile, the school's foremost "nice scientist" Neil Hamilton has been called out to a household where an experimental hormone has transformed 8-year-old child Bobby into a foul-mouthed giant. "I'd like you to [illegible]" he yells at his hapless mom. Neil returns to the lab to work on a treatment, but it's the audience who's treated...to a rousing synthrock research montage! Neil poops out quick and returns to his favorite activities: growing miniature vegetables and having sex with his students. While he's doing the latter, the protesters break into the lab to free the test animals, some of which have been injected with a serum that makes them grow at an insane rate and hunger for human flesh. A [illegible] if that's not enough, the rats spread their condition to other vermin like nobody's business, and it's not long before chaos erupts. In one standout scene, a giant rodent bites the penis off a horny student.

Overall, this is a very engaging lump of slick trash. The pacing is brisk, the gore is plentiful and the special effects are more than sufficiently grisly. Also, the film features the most mind-wrenching sex scene you'll see outside a Rinse Dream movie. The female doctor in the Giant Bobby scene was played by Jackie Burroughs, who later starred as Crispin Glover's mother in the 2004 [illegible] remake. [illegible] far as I'm concerned, this verminous double duty crowns Burroughs the Queen of Ratsploitation. (*ZC*)

THE FORBIDDEN DANCE

Dir. Greydon Clark / 1990

A South American princess grinds her crotch against rich white people to alert them to the tragedies of deforestation.

Greydon Clark made some of the most entertaining movies of the video age. *Joysticks*, *Wacko* and *Without Warning* rank high on the list of absolute pleasures. So don't you come around here talkin' trash on his sweeping Lambada epic.

Nisa, the jewel of a Brazilian forest tribe, is sent to Los Angeles by her regal father in the hopes that she can stop the ecological mayhem being caused by corporate bulldozers. She's accompanied by her mute medicine man/guardian Joa, who commands all of nature's powers...meaning he can explode potted plants with his mind. After he's arrested for his talents, Nisa is forced to take work as a live-in maid for a racist Beverly Hills couple. The immediate obvious conflict ends her job, but not before she's able to teach their quasi-handsome son the Lambada. Back on the heartless big city streets, Nisa comes face-to-face with the urban underbelly in your typical montage of sex shops, skate scum, hookers and, yes, a half-hearted studs-n-leather industrial punk who bars her passage on the sidewalk. She ends up taken in by Mickey, a sleazy dance club madam, who protects Nisa's honor by sticking a switchblade in a man's hairy navel. Yecch! Mickey puts her to work, billing her as "The Queen of the Jungle," and Nisa starts spreading the magic of Lambada, one drunken businessman at a time. Somehow, with the help of Casio-Latin clunkers Kid Creole & the Coconuts, this leads to world peace and ecological conservation.

The Forbidden Dance paints all upper-class Caucasians as bigots, which may be true. .I don't know any. But even a villainous anti-naturalist portrayed by Richard Lynch is charmed by the righteous new steps, and we're treated to some sensuous gyrations from this great screen heavy. But the star performance here really comes from character icon Sid Haig as Joa, who does his best work since the ol' Filipino exploitation days, including enduring a "rousing" dance scene opposite a middle-aged woman bearing a handful of condoms.

The film was released on the same day as the feature *Lambada*, though Clark's ode to the sultry sensation was the only one to secure the use of the hit song by the same name. Ironically, the fever that had been generated by the popular club hit had already simmered and both films hit the ground hard. Still, we must never forget Nisa's powerful message: "They must stop killing the trees or the sun will eat the air!" (*ZC*)

FORBIDDEN ZONE

Dir. Richard Elfman / 1980

The ultimate spazzoid cinematic assault from the 6th Dimension.

Truly the most unhinged musical you'll ever see, Richard Elfman's no-budget masterwork is a concussive combination of '30s studio comedies, science fiction, minstrel entertainment and new wave hysteria. The story follows The Hercules Family, a penniless pack of mismatched losers who unwittingly live above the gateway to the 6th Dimension. 12-year-old Flash Hercules (played by 60-year-old Phil Gordon) is a mischievous brat, while his good-natured sister Frenchy (the director's wife Marie-Pascale Elfman) is innocently curious about what's in the basement.

The two inevitably find themselves taking a trip through the restricted door, where they encounter wee King Fausto (*Fantasy Island's* Hervé Villechaize) and his subjects, among them a frog butler, two mushmouthed lunatics (The Kipper Kids) and countless other hysterical semi-humans. Fausto takes a liking to Frenchy, which boils the blood of Queen Doris (the incredible Susan Tyrrell, who'd been dating Villechaize before shooting). When the Queen takes Frenchy prisoner, Flash must rally his pals and brain-dead wrestler grandpa to rescue her from the hypersexualized otherworld. Along the way, they'll encounter murderous primates, topless princesses, Turkish rapists and even Satan himself (played by Danny Elfman). The Lord of Darkness is joined by the lost souls of Hell in performing a Cab Calloway number, after which they cheerfully decapitate one of the film's leads. It all ends in a rousing musical number that showcases every character in the movie, plus a few new faces, including a spiky-headed spandex-n-chains new waver who dances like his nipples are on fire.

Forbidden Zone began as an offshoot adventure for pre-punk performance group The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo, but the project quickly rampaged out of control, becoming a three-year obsession for its creators. Despite their lack of experience and resources, the Elfman clan somehow managed to assemble a beautifully brain-damaged saga of reality-hopping heroism. The sets are flimsy, the soundtrack (Danny Elfman's first) is brilliant and the cast is incredible, including actors—not characters—named Ugh-Fudge Bwana, Hyman Diamond (Richard Elfman's real-life accountant) and Toshiro Baloney, who would later direct hit indie film *Freeway* under his less entertaining name Matthew Bright. The late exploitation superstar Joe Spinell and Warhol muse Viva also appear. The entire affair was shot in black-and-white, most likely because watching this much garish sugar-fueled insanity in full color would bust your goddamn cortex. (*ZC*)

FORCE OF DARKNESS

Dir. Alan Hauge / 1985

A multiple personality supernatural psychostalks San Francisco.

Conrad is a middle-aged man plagued by demons that force him to kill. His new age hippie brother and high-class yuppie psychiatrist offer no real help, and the only person willing to stop him is a military hothead who gears up for battle by taking on three muggers (one of whom is played by the film's producer to cut corners). This trio's criminal ringleader is an intimidatingly-styled fashion ruffian in a casual dog collar/tank top combo who pulls a blade on his target. It takes some time before the police finally surmise that the current murderwave is a result of occult possession. They head to the maniac's bunker and utter the word "Jesus" a few times, which makes the evil manifest as a glowing red dot. The crimson speck disappears into the night after making a demon-infested woman howl, "We hate your guts...SHIIIITTTT!!!" Despite the language, a suspiciously Christian stench permeates the air. (*ZC*)

THE FOREIGNER

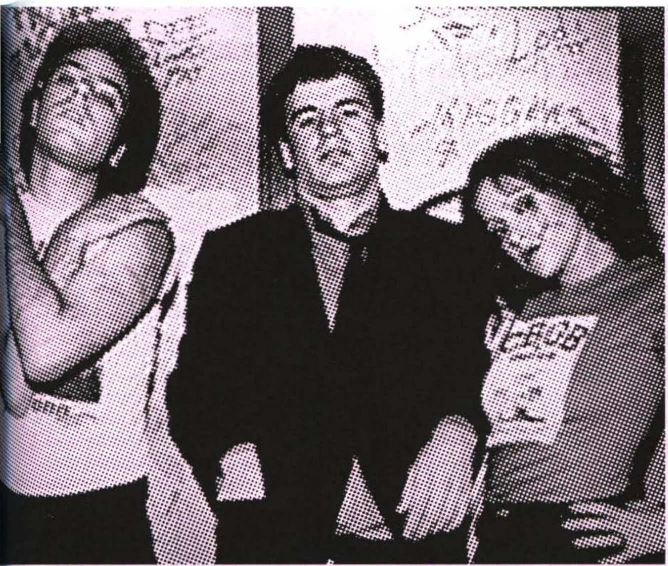
Dir. Amos Poe | 1978

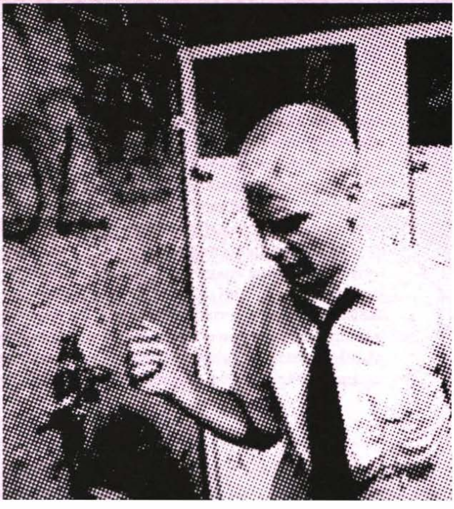
An aimless secret agent scours New York for answers.

NYC basement-film luminary Poe mans the controls for the epic 16mm tale of Max Menace (Eric Mitchell), an uptight European spy displaced in a transforming Manhattan. The formally-attired everyman slums in the legendary Chelsea Hotel and watches network news footage of a chaotic Damned performance. By day, he wanders the streets and accosts various vaguely underworldish characters in an attempt to learn the details of his mission. Meanwhile, an effeminate beatnik (Duncan Hannah of Poe's *Unmade Beds*) assembles The Bags, a leather-clad punk assassination force gathered to shadow and eventually snuff Menace. This rogueish group (no relation to the LA rock band of the same name) is partially composed of real-life performance artists and members of No Wave innovators DNA. Femme fatales abound, including Deborah Harry chanteusin' around in an alley, and long segments of existential voiceover cloud the viewer's attempt to discern the plotline. One of the shadowy spies is played by the late Anya Phillips, dominatrix and girlfriend of jazz punk legend James Chance/White. At the height of its scummiest era, the city offers no charity to the traveler, and his desperation increases until the walls close in.

75% female artpunk band The Erasers blare a discordant cover of Iggy Pop's "Funtime" while all four original members of The Cramps savagely knife Menace in the restroom. Mitchell was actually stabbed by singer Lux Interior in this scene, and the blood is plainly visible running from the real wound.

Poe's fourth film, *The Foreigner*, was made with a $5000 auto loan from the Merchant Bank of New York. Of course, all locations were used without any clearance, including footage of a terrorist at the World Trade Center and JFK Airport, shooting luxuries that guerrilla filmmakers would be unlikely to enjoy in this age. The film was completed in sequence over seven days with almost no sleep, and the soundtrack is by composer/Patti Smith Group guitarist Ivan Kral, who co-directed *The Blank Generation* with Poe in '76. (*ZC*)





AMOS POE

Director- *THE BLANK GENERATION ('76); THE FOREIGNER*

DAM: How did you first run across Ivan Krol, Eric Mitchell and some of the other artists you'd collaborate with through the '70s?

AP: Ivan and I were buddies at New Line Cinema, and then he worked as superintendent for the neighboring building. Eric answered an ad I put in The Village Voice. He brought Patti Astor. I met Richard Hell when he was working at a store called Cinemabilia on 13th Street.

***Night Lunch* was your first major project, and the immediate precursor to punk document *The Blank Generation*. What led to you shooting it?**

I had a silent 16mm camera and thought I'd record bands silently and then add the sound later. Ivan and I went out and shot a bunch of different bands: Bowie, Rod Stewart, Roxy Music, the Dolls, etc. This was the end of the glam rock phase, which I was really into, and it led to the CBGBs scene.

How was *The Blank Generation* received by the documented bonds' audiences?

Both Night Lunch and The Blank Generation were difficult films initially for audiences. About 50% of audiences hated them. They wanted the music films in sync. But the other half got the idea.

Where did *Unmade Beds* come from? Was this a story you'd wanted to make before the emergence of the punk movement?

Unmade Beds came from an idea I had about re-inventing a Godard and the French New Wave. In '76, I saved up $4000 and decided that the time was ripe!

***The Foreigner* seemed more plot-driven and technically complex than your previous work. Did it feel like a step forward for you?**

Yes, after Unmade Beds, which was sort of a visual essay, and working with Eric Mitchell, I wanted to make another film right away that was more linear and much darker. It came from an idea about the American dream, and how it was really the Amercan nightmare.

The film hod a strong cost. How did you select/recruit octors for your movies?

Similar to Warhol and Cassavetes, from friends and people I hung out with; people I thought were superstars in own right. Duncan Hannah, Eric Mitchell, Patti Astor, Debbie Harry, Robert Gordon, Anya Phillips. I'm not sure one can call them "actors," just like I'm not sure certain bands were "musicians," but I think they all had artistic sensibility where they would come off as "real," like in a Bresson film.

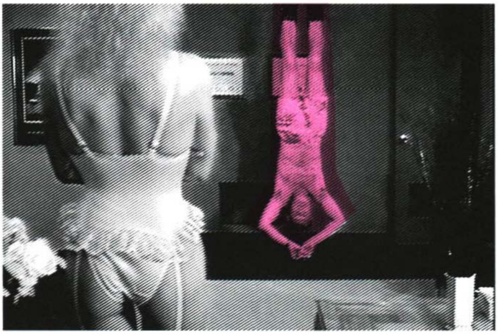
I also had no access to professional actors.

FRANKENSTEIN GENERAL HOSPITAL

Dir. Deborah Romare I 1988

Dr. Bob Frankenstein (Mark Blankfield) creates a monster in the basement of a hospital.

Blankfield plays another mad scientist (see Jekyll and Hyde Together Again). He's wonderfully and truly seems like the love child of Gene Wilder and underappreciated rubberface Gerrit Graham. This comedy is pretty dry, but has enough hits to amuse any viewer. In a liposuction scene, the vacuum gets a little out of hand, pulling the clothes off nurses that end up on top of a doctor. A stripper dance is in the doctor's lounge with a "Fine Steaks" neon sign glowing behind her. Frankenstein's monster ("Irwin Keyes") terrorizes boys "skating around with a boombox," though the actor who steals the show is Leslie Jordan as Frankenstein's sidekick Iggy, the effeminate Southern version of Igor. Everything that actor does is funny. He opens up [illegible] brain and finds [illegible] "You're too ugly to be a genius," he says. Featuring bad overdubbing and [illegible], why would you deny yourself the pleasure of watching this film? The supporting cast also features Ben Stein, Bobby "Boris" Pickett, Lou Cutell, who plays Amazing Larry in Peewee's Big Adventure. (BC)



FRATERNITY VACATION

Dir. James Frawley / 1985

Nerd Wendell Tvedt desperately wants to join the coolest fraternity. His father desperately wants his son to get laid in Palm Springs, and promises college boys Joe (Cameron Dye) and Mother (Tim Robbins) a Jacuzzi for their frat house if they accomplish this seemingly impossible task.

Wendell is enthusiastically played by Stephen Geoffreys, who later went on to do hardcore gay pornography as Sam Ritter. You'd think any film that starts with the dad from *ALF* saying he wants his son to get jiggy would be a winner, but alas it's all downhill from there. Tons of great actors are in this and allowed no more than a shrug. John Vernon plays a grumbling police chief. An underused Charles Rocket plays aerobics suit-wearing DJ Madman Mac. He bounces in the corner of a club wearing tiny sunglasses and little else. One shining moment: Robbins sprays beer in his face and crushes the can on his head. That's right; he's got an Academy Award and you don't.

In one montage (and there are many), Wendell tries on some cool new clothes. The best ensemble has him going punk, sporting Terminator glasses, leather pants, skull tank top, stud bracelets and a metal belt. This is one of those movies where we're constantly being reminded how fun everything is by having loud music play to flashy quick shots of people doing things. (BC)

FREEJACK

Dir. Geoff Murphy / 1992

A racecar driver (Emilio Estevez) gets zapped into a future where homeless people crowd the streets and Mick Jagger still can't act.

The filmmakers had such faith in the progression of technology that they envisioned a 2009 with time travel and police supertanks. How sad they must be that our modern reality brought scientific advancements like cyberporn and iPods. One thing they got right (kind of) is that punks will still be around, though in this version a guy with a mohawk wears jogging clothes and escorts a well-dressed lady to a nightclub. The camera pans across the bar and for a third of a second you can see a guy with messy spiky hair in the far left corner of the screen casually talking to a friend.

Never has a professional actor looked as disinterested in a role as Estevez does here. This movie could have benefited from the casting of an action star like Van Damme or Sly. It's the kind of movie they could make work, but instead we get a movie where you'll constantly think, "Gee, I could be sleeping...or dead." David Johansen also stars, again copying Jagger: only this time not with singing but with awful acting. (BC)

FREEWAY

Dir. Francis Delia / 1988

A religious nut with a gun lays waste on the big-city highways.

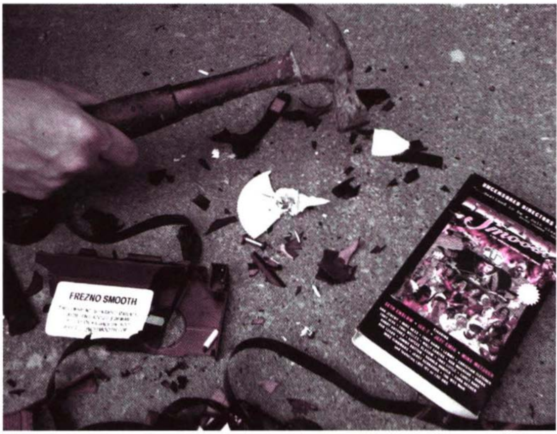
This reprehensible, forgettable action blast opens with a punk brawl outside a seedy Los Angeles club. Studded greasers bash against afrohawks as a disinterested pink-streaked punkette gets ogled by a no-neck with the greasiest devillock on E a . She opts to take off in her car, and is shot by a highway psycho (Billy Drago) while driving 70 mph. The bullet-happy maniac phones local live DJ Dr. Lazarus (Richard Belzer) and speaks in rapturous Latin after his shootings. Eventually, a nurse (Darlanne Fluegel) widowed by the highway killings gathers enough clues to track down the killer.

Clint Howard steals the show as a sleazy auto mechanic whose Firebird has a naked lady gearshift and X-rated 8-track player: "I like my eggs sunny side up, if you get my meaning." Uh...nope, we don't. Later, a marginal punk with a bleached Brian Bosworth 'do makes the scene at a pharmacy. This is the only '80s non-porn feature from the director of both Weird Al Yankovic's "I Lost on Jeopardy" music video and the incredible surreal adult film *Nightdreams*. (ZC)

FREZNO SMOOTH

Dirs. Troy Adamitis & Adam Barker / 1999

The worst.



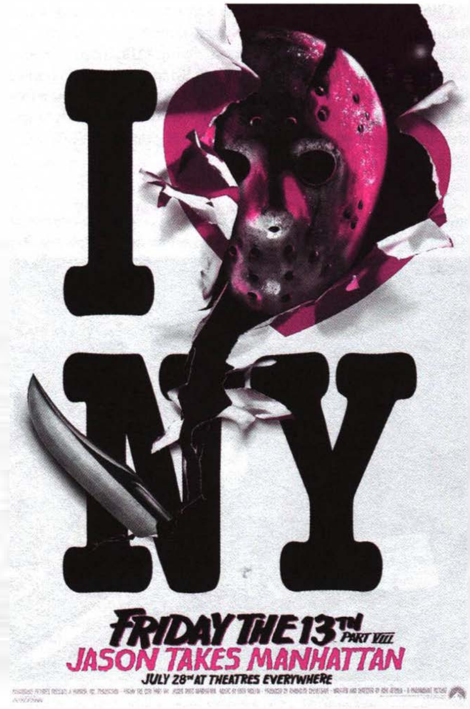
It is my unpleasant duty to inform you that this movie exists. In your most traumatic nightmares, you've never imagined something this awful could have taken form. The so-called plot involves a motocross scandal, but this straight-to-swap-meet VHS release is honestly just an excuse to collect the most amateurish, irritating and unfunny ideas possible. Boob jokes, cop jokes, puke jokes, dick jokes and every other surefire dud is proudly presented in the hopes that illiterate people are capable of hooking up their VCRs. Teenagers hump in fast motion, Ron Jeremy rolls around with half-naked women and a goateed pop-punk band bust out their suicide-inducing audio horseshit at a house party. Later, Social Distortion's Mike Ness makes a completely unnecessary cameo at a bowling alley, layering on the film's 4000th reminder that punk was long gone by the time the late '90s starting gnawing on its corpse. At least the creators of *Bio-Dome* can now take solace in the fact that they're behind the *second* most worthless film ever made. As soon as I finish writing this, I'll derive great pleasure from hammering my *Frezno Smooth* videocassette into black plastic dust in my driveway, which is the only way this movie will *ever* provide entertainment to *anyone*. (ZC)

FRIDAY THE 13th PART VIII: JASON TAKES MANHATTAN

Dir. Rob Hedden / 1989

Backwoods butcher on Broadway.

Sadly, the only installment of the eminent series to feature punks is as limp as a teenage corpse. In the film's first 45 seconds, New York City's degradation is represented by four teenage punks lying out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FRIDAY THE 13TH PART VIII
JASON TAKES MANHATTAN
JULY 28TH AT THEATRES EVERYWHERE

on the sidewalk, proud hair styled high. Meanwhile, in New Jersey's Crystal Lake, a lightning storm revives re-drowned retard Jason Voorhees, who immediately embarks on his requisite killing spree. Seeking a much-needed change of scenery, he boards a high school party boat setting sail for the big city harbor.

His first victim is a teased-out female glam metal hopeful who meets her demise at the business end of her own flying V guitar. From this point on, it's a mighty long ride; the film breaks the one hour mark before we catch so much as a glimpse of the promised urbanity. Fortunately for our maniac, America's busiest city is all but deserted. With the exception of a few lazily stereotyped rapists and hobos, Jason is free to stalk and exterminate in relative peace. A tousled onlooker in a leather jacket seems unimpressed by the undead butcher's eventual subway rampage. Later, loose in Times Square and down to his final victims, Jason kicks over the aforementioned gutterpunk quartet's boombox. They grab their chains in preparation for a rumble, but reassess when the hulking slasher lifts his trademarked hockey mask to expose the mutilated face-meat earned over six previous series entries. *Part 5* doesn't count, goddammit. (*ZC*)

FRISK

Dir. Todd Verow / 1995

A movie the gay community can hate more than *Cruising*.

Through a series of letters sent to his ex-roommate/sex friend Julian, Dennis (Michael Gunther) details his obsession with violence and death; how it began normally, but shifted toward fetishism and snuff pornography. As the film progresses into Dennis' adult life, it goes off the rails with graphic portrayals of violent, drug-addled group sex with unconscious knife-block masochists. But it's not all party and play with Dennis—he really wants to kill his sexual partners—and when he finally indulges his bloodlust the victims start to pile up.

Now living his dream, Dennis needs someone to share it with; after all, this was before you could use the Internet to brag about your murders. So, by means that the movie never explains, he manages to join with a duo of serial killers (Parker Posey and James Lyons). The group's first victim is a junked-out punk (Alexis Arquette) whom they lure into Dennis' sparse apartment with the promise of drugs and money. Dennis shoots up the kid and pushes the limp body to the floor while his impassive cohorts look on. He pokes a dollar bill into the punk's ass and then shoves it in his mouth as he rapes him, squeezing as much mileage as possible out of the definitions of ATM.

This film has nothing to offer except shock value and gratuitous nudity. It's nauseating, reinforces the worst gay stereotypes and, worst of all, does all that while being wholly unremarkable. There is zero time spent on character development, making for much confusion, and a few subplots that begin and disappear without explanation. But, if you like snuff films and wangs, this is your *Citizen Kane*. (*LAF*)

FROG

Dir. David Grossman / 1987

A young boy (Scott Grimes) finds a talking frog
(voiced by Paul Williams) that wants to be kissed.

Shelley Duvall and Elliott Gould must have done this weird fairytale/life lesson for owed community service. Why else would these once-huge stars be in this low budget, suspiciously Canadian film? Every scene—even the humorous ones—has an underlying sadness to it, as if *Degrassi High* had a zany frog episode.

At school, two carriers of the counterculture torch sneer at loser Arlo (Grimes). One has very large white, red and green hair while his pal has a blue devil lock. Things later go bad and frogs are unleashed all over the school's science fair. This bums everyone out except for two punks (one being the devil-locked guy from earlier) who totally dig the anarchy, and end up wearing live frogs on their extreme 'dos. I wonder what small children think of people like this. The tape was released by a company called Feature Films for Families. On the back of the box are questions parents are supposed to ask their kids after viewing the program. The quiz deals mostly with friendship and feelings, with nary a question about punks. What do parents say when asked about *that* subject? When I was a child I remember seeing crazy looking dudes in *Star Trek IV*, MTV videos, etc. I figured they were mentally ill people from another planet here to raise a ruckus for no good reason. Even Billy Idol freaked me out. I wasn't scared, just completely baffled/fascinated as to why someone would look and act so wild. In elementary school art class, I drew a nest housing a bird with earrings and a giant multicolored mohawk. Clearly, my parents offered me zero punk guidance. (*BC*)

FUGAZI: INSTRUMENT

Dir. Jem Cohen / 1998

A documentary chronicling the life and times of
venerable punk heroes Fugazi.

To try and capture an abstraction such as a cultural movement, a historic event or the origins of a musical group in a concrete medium (I'm speaking of film, specifically) has always proved difficult.

Attempting to boil down a complex history into a two-hour runtime means omissions and creative license are necessary to create a compact product. In the documentary genre, the formula of talking heads, archival footage and voiceover narration has become a standard set in stone, with varying results. When documentarians approach their subject from an oblique angle, taking a wistful or pastiche approach, the focus and direction of the film can suffer. Jem Cohen finds the perfect balance in *Instrument* by presenting a band that has historical and cultural significance. The film operates in a different mode, a scattered and almost haphazard manner with bits and pieces gleaned from here and there, avoiding the stale and dusty documentary format.

In an interview with *Punk Planet*, Cohen referenced *Instrument*'s structure: "Well, it's a collage, but not a random one. We tried hard to give the film arcs and rhythms." That just about sums it up, yet I'm still compelled to babble on about its artistic merits. The fact that Fugazi refused to do traditional sit-down interviews led Cohen to cook up a gumbo of stellar live footage, skewed montage and fan interviews in an attempt to capture the (ahem) *essence* of Fugazi, no matter how new age that may sound. There is no stiff chronology of the band, no story of origin, really no entry point of a beginning, middle or end. However, the film never becomes an impenetrable mess, but casts an enjoyable trance on the viewer. Cohen admirably avoids didacticism and rote explanatory filmmaking.

A large part of *Instrument* is made up of fan interviews, done in parking lots and lines preceding Fugazi shows. Many of these fans are belligerent, ignorant or a mix thereof. The most interesting aspect of these interviews is how the visual signifiers of punk dress in the '70s and '80s (safety pins, leather jackets, mohawks, etc.) faded in the '90s, as the dress of so-called "punks" became a strange blend of oversized skate/mall/white-trash Faith-No-More fashion. These dated fans contrast the timelessness of Fugazi, who are an entity in and of themselves, certainly informed by outside influences and musical movements but never wholly defined by them. *Instrument* does them justice; it's a true and substantial testament that doesn't shackle the band's politics and origins to a rigid formula, but flows and represents them in the most successful manner a tangible document could, capturing all the intangibles that go along with music. (*SC*)

FULL CONTACT

Dir. Ringo Lam / 1993

A Chinese crimewave runs wild due to nymphomaniac punk losers.

An over-muscled thug with a bleach-striped ponytail buzzcut and leather studwear is among a murderous trio of looters who terrorize a high-end retail store. Meanwhile, hard-hitting but moral nightclub bouncer Jeff (Chow Yun Fat) angers a loan shark and is forced into hiding. Desperate for work, Jeff and his pals ally with the criminals to pull off a basic heist. He's coupled with neon-clad party girl Virgin, who attempts to seduce him:

"Check if there's a hole in my underpants."

"Nope...all I see is a vomiting crab."

When the job goes awry, Jeff loses a best friend and two fingers, going rabid for vengeance. A particularly brutal film with a blood-soaked end for almost every character (including the animalistic punk) and featuring the finest closing line in Hong Kong action cinema: "Well, masturbate in Hell!" (*ZC*)

FUNLAND

Dir. Michael A. Simpson / 1988

David "Squiggy" Lander plays Bruce Burger, a Funland clown that goes on a low-impact rampage after being bumped out of his position by the theme park's new Mafioso owners.

The director of the second and third *Sleepaway Camp* installments is responsible for this anti-appreciated schizoid comedy gem. A girl with a two-foot red mohawk appears for mere seconds during an early scene, but punks are quickly eclipsed in an avalanche of racist watermelon jokes and bizarre sexual innuendos ("I'd like to take my shoes off and run barefoot through her tits!"). In what is easily the best choreographed dining scene since *Mac & Me*, three lunch counter employees rap and breakdance while a mute woman in vampiric rubber S&M gear mysteriously appears and paces the cafeteria.

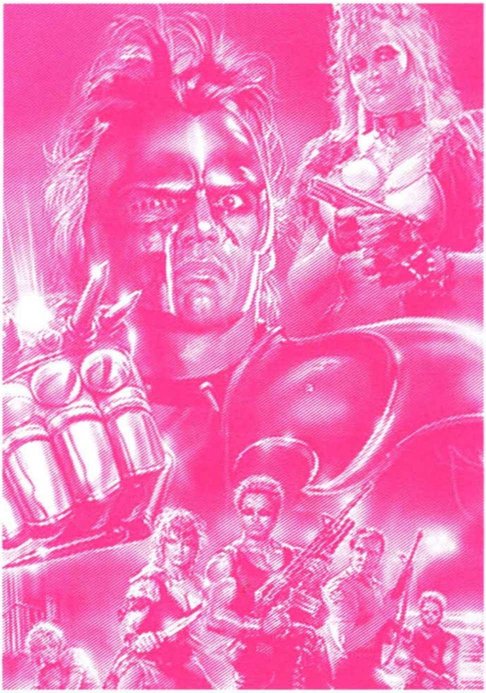
Hidden between Klansmen costumes and gay-bashing gags is a genuinely sensitive exploration of a man in the throes of a nervous breakdown. Lander's performance is impressive as failing clown Bruce Burger quietly spirals out of control. Here, he acts through greasepaint and the burden of his Squiggy persona, managing to elicit true pity while wearing a giant pizza slice costume. The scene where Burger plays poker with a cigarette-puffing pepperoni puppet, the ghost of his former employer and a talking wax statue of Humphrey Bogart should be mandatory viewing for all film school graduates. (*ZC*)

FUTURE-KILL

Dir. Ronald W. Moore / 1985

A group of frat boys are hunted by a gang of punks across a savaged shell of a city.

The casual viewer may be misled by the film's title (as well as the creepy H.R. Giger painting adorning the box), believing that they're in for a science-fiction film. They'll be surprised to discover the first 15 minutes of the film bear more of a resemblance to *Porky's* than



Aliens: almost nothing fantastical occurs at any point. However, it's an enjoyable and unique movie. It drastically changes tone multiple times and after a brief prologue introducing the movie's villain (played by *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* hitchhiker Edwin Neal), party pranks and madcap frat hijinks are given lengthy indulgence. All the necessary sex-comedy characters are briefly exhibited, including the nerd, the preps and the fatguy. The prank de résistance occurs when half the frat get splashed with hot tar and covered in feathers. The perpetrator tries to apologize to his pledge brothers by way of bringing a prostitute back to the frat house. But he pulls a final prank out of his pocket when he somehow orchestrates a last-second switcheroo between the attractive prostitute and a big old fatty just as the deed is about to be done. Exasperated by the endless zaniness, the frat leader orders his guys on a mission. The TV news has been reporting about an explosion set off at a nuclear research lab, placed there by members of an anti-nuke street gang called The Mutants. This crew consists of exaggerated punks, dressed like they've survived an atomic war, with makeup like Daryl Hannah in *Blade Runner*. The frat boys' mission is to drive into the city and bring back one of these "freaks."

This is where the film takes an enormous turn. The guys go to the city: a burned out war zone inhabited exclusively by the prowling Mutants. When they get into an altercation with some of the gang members, a maniac shows up and murders one of the fratties with an enormous metal blade-glove. His name is Splatter, the only actual mutant in the gang, having been horribly disfigured by some sort of radiation poisoning. He wears a *Phantom of the Opera* half-mask and lots of glittery body armor. When the non-violent leader of The Mutants protests the killing, Splatter murders him and blames it on the frat boys. The film then becomes a pretty straightforward rip-off of *The Warriors* as the kids get split up and fight their way back to safety. They end up saving a female Mutant from being raped by cops, and she gives them help along the way. At one point they visit a club where the band Max & the Makeups are playing. The frat guys are the only non-Mutants in attendance, but they all meet girls and have a really good time. It's an inspirational moment, promoting understanding and cooperation between frats and freakazoids.

Another radical shift in tone occurs when the band of college boys accidentally end up inside Splatter's house. They meet up with another sympathetic Mutant woman, this one played by Marilyn Burns (another *Texas Chainsaw* veteran) who wants them to ambush the mutant wildman. The ambush doesn't work out and Splatter sneaks in to start picking them off one by one. This movie should be appreciated for taking several familiar formulas and smashing them into a new sort of appealing collision. It's also worth noting how much the filmmakers accomplished on an obviously limited budget, both with the costumes and set design. Plus they're clearly having fun making this movie and playing with clichés. There's a fantastic scene where two Mutants think they hear something that turns out to be a cat, but they don't just leave it there; the Mutants whip out their machine guns and fire, causing the cat to explode. That is real movie magic. (TS

FUTURE SCHLOCK

Dirs. Chris Kiely & Barry Peak I 1984

Society takes another kick in the teeth.

After Australia's middle-class revolt, the suburbans—or "subbies," as they are now known—wall off all mutants and undesirables in an urban ghetto. With their water tranquilized, the denizens of the crumbling city are content to hang out in Alvin's Hole, a low-class dump bar operated by new wave gutter meat. The place's most popular act is male/female singing duo Sarah & Bear, who spend their days running down cops in a hyper-powered Corvette. They occasionally disguise themselves as subbies to subvert and create panic, or at least put lobsters in the police station toilets. While raising a ruckus at a tract home party, the pair picks up rebellious subbie Ronnie, who undergoes a major transformation to new wave ghetto warrior when she moves in to Sarah & Bear's house. Soon known as The Terrible Three, the crew terrorizes the subbies until civilization crumbles completely. (*ZC*)

FUTURE SHOCK

Dirs. Eric Parkinson, Matt Reeves
& Oley Sassone I 1994

Modern technology was boring before it even existed.

A three-headed turd disguised as a virtual reality horror anthology. Martin Kove (*Steele Justice*) plays a psychiatrist whose groundbreaking digital hypnosis treatments seem to do more harm than good. Strangely enough, this interminable cinematic trashcan sports a strong cast, with familiar faces ranging from Bill Paxton to *Blade Runner's* Brion James. In the latter actor's segment, a sociophobic, channel-flipping housewife stumbles across a segment from *Return of the Living Dead* in which Linnea Quigley's iconic punk character Trash drops some dime-store philosophy regarding mortality. Footage from *Howling II* is also used, though sadly none of the incredible new wave werewolf scenes. (*ZC*)

GAME OF SURVIVAL

Dir. Armand Gazarian / 1989

Six alien warriors battle to win their freedom.

A race of sporting lizard men kidnap the seven most powerful fighters in the galaxy and stage a massive competition "on a planet known a Earth...in a place called Los Angeles." The combatants are set to square off on our soil until only one remains. Though each is from a separate world, all bear a primarily barbarian aesthetic, the only exceptions being a clean-cut dwarf and an Asian new wave feralite with warpaint and an enormous mohawk. As he wanders the alleys of LA, a fast-talking pusher pulls him aside: "Hey man...great look! I got whatchoo need!" The alien chokes down the dealer's pills and heads off to the heart of the city. En route, he runs across a man in a chicken suit. He then steals a car, but has a difficult time driving it. Because he's from another planet, you see. (ZC)

GEEK MAGGOT BINGO

aka THE FREAK FROM SUCKWEASEL MOUNTAIN

Dir. Nick Zedd / 1983

A mad scientist creates a monster to battle the vampire menace.

Famed NYC shock merchant Zedd's second feature-lengrh assault on cinema, and an extremely norable accomplishment in shoestring filmmaking. Quack professor Dr. Frankenberry (Robert Andrews) is dismissed from his position at the university after reanimating a kitten. He employs mohawked hunchback Geeko (Bruno Zeus) to dress as a female prostitute and hack men to pieces for use in experiments. Frankenberry's medical madness is illustrated with excessive footage of actual deformed fetuses in jars. His daughter Buffy (Brenda Bergman) is concerned about dad, but spends her time romping around the castle bedroom with various young men, including a limp-dicked suitor in one of the film's most awkward scenes. Her lover leaves (naked!) and is attacked by vampire Scumbalina (Donna Death). Dr. Frankenberry, fearing for Buffy's safety, creates a "Formaldehyde Man" to vanquish the bloodsuckers. The necessary body candidate is wandering swamp cowboy The Rawhide Kid, played with drawling enthusiasm by punk innovator Richard Hell. But by the time he shows up, it may be too late to save the Frankenberries from their self-made, modem day Frankenstein tragedy.

In addition to her performance, Donna Death also served as executive producer, caterer, set designer, etc. The credits are a who's who of New York artpunk pseudonyms, from Gumby Spangler to Residue. The melodramatic musical score is liberally swiped from major studio films of the '40s through '60s, and Zedd's sincere appreciation of golden age low-budget horror shines through his cardboard sets. The Formaldehyde Man is a garish, twa-headed, six-limbed creature that's a really impressive construct for this movie or any ather, courtesy of makeup artists Ed French and Tom Lauten, both of whom would go on to major success doing makeup work far Hollywood blockbusters. Here, a gigantic red-and-green torso is stitched together and wrapped in mummy's rags, one of the heads flaunting an exposed brain like the Metaluna Mutants in the 1955 sci-fi classic Eeelr0lf KhTr. Even better are the ultra-inventive gore effects at the film's savage climax. Still, the charm of backyard moviemaking holds the reins as lightning and gunshot "special effects" are scratched directly into the film stock. Marker-drawn matte backgrounds recall the most enduring work of penniless production auteurs The Kuchar Brothers & CeibrlneafaleKiieT(r though at the closing credits' end, the only dedication is made to "Norman Bodacious Romeo, Hacksaw Bushweed and all negroes, wherever they may be." The feature is bookended with comic bits from legendary East Coast horror host Zacherley, who'd also appear in later NYC scum cinema including Frank Henenlotter's .jKfhrKhdar and .iKhfaheiifai,r Zedd allegedly directed a portion of the film via telephone because he didn't like being in the same room with one of the leads. (ZC)

GET CRAZY

Dir. Allan Arkush / 1983

All sorts of wild events transpire at a New Year's Eve rock concert, ranging from outrageous band antics to an aggressive buyout attempt by a corporate villain.

Allan Arkush's follow-up to his beloved BiRfr'h'Bif ffder DReiifr offers an even more outrageous look at rock, roll, sex, drugs and the people who form the scene. Seemingly born for the project, lifelong music fan Arkush spent some of his formative career years as an usher at Bill Gralhar's legendary Fillmore East. He captures some of that outlandish behavior and frenzied energy and packages it in a funny and fast-moving rock comedy that should be infinitely more appreciated.

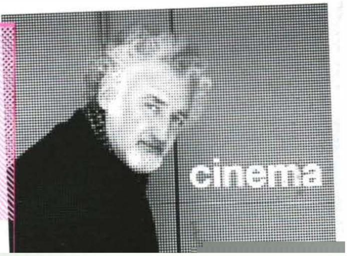
It's New Year's Eve in New York City and Max Wolfe (Allen Garfield) is getting ready to present a big concert at his legendary venue, The Saturn Theatre. When confronted by evil silver-suit wearing corporate asshole Colin Beverly (Ed Begley Jr.), Max suffers sudden chest pains and thinks he may be dying. Colin sees this as a perfect opportunity for a hostile takeover and pursues an alliance with Max's yuppie nephew and sole heir, Sammy (Miles Chapin). Max turns to his trusted stage manager Neil (Daniel Stern) to keep the show going. As the bands and the fans Start showing up at The Saturn, things do indeed get crazy.

On the lineup for the night is a hippie "family band" led by Captain Cloud (Howard Kaylan, aka Eddie from Flo & Eddie); King Blues (Bill Henderson), a good-tempered blues man; Auden, a Dylanesque character played by proto-punk godfather Lou Reed; Reggie Wanker (Malcolm McDowell), an egotistical rocker in the Mick Jagger mold who ends up having a conversation with his penis; and, of most interest here, an almost all-girl new wave band called Nada. Nada is also the name of the band's singer (Lori Eastside), who bears a Toni Basil look in her satin cheerleader outfit. The rest of Nada consists of about a dozen other women dressed in all sorts of get-ups, ranging from togas to cocktail dresses to new wave hairdos and button-down suits, and the band arrives in a beat up old Chevy sedan with a license plate that says "GET BENT." The trunk pops open and out comes the band's secret weapon: an aggressive punk maniac named Piggy (Fear's Lee Ving in the part he was born to play). He immediately bashes his head into a wall, signs a top-dollar contract by smashing his skull into the form, and punches a stagehand in the gut. Go Piggy!! Ving's Fear-mates Derf Scratch and Philo Cramer show up in supporting roles, and the rest of the cast includes tons of cult movie favorites (Mary Woronov, Paul Bartel, Clint Howard, Dick Miller, Jackie Joseph, Linnea Quigley, Robert Picardo and Franklin Ajaye) and almost as many musicians (Fabian Forte, John Densmore, Bobby Sherman and Coati Mundi). Despite this staggering cast, the film's most fascinating character is phantom drug purveyor Electric Larry, who never even shows his face. Instead, the black-clad, laser-eyed spectre appears whenever his services are required, performing superhuman feats of narcotic magic and disappearing into the ether.

As the night progresses, we encounter more members of the bands, the Saturn's staff and audience members, including Neil's teenage sister (Stacey Nelkin), a devoted Reggie Wanker fan. She wears a very '80s spandex outfit with new wave sunglasses and jiggles down the street to a soundtrack-only tune by the Ramones called "Chop Suey," which has since turned up on the expanded CD version of their *Pleasant Dreams* album. Nada and Piggy aren't given much of a story arc, but their concert footage is brilliant. The first Nada song is a somewhat catchy new wave ditty, but when Piggy is unleashed to perform a hardcore version of "Hoochie Coochie Man," things start to really roll! While Nada plays the song in the movie, the music is actually performed by Fear, and the tune was later re-recorded (with a different lineup) on the band's 2000 release *American Beer*. Piggy goes berserk, dives into the audience and delivers his vein-bulging rendition as he surfs across the crowd. He encourages some neck-snapping balcony dives and the audience goes apeshit. While witnessing this performance, King Blues remarks, "Who says a white boy can't sing the blues?" (*SH*)

ALLAN ARKUSH

Director – *ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL; GET CRAZY*



AA: I wanted to do another music picture, this one about my experiences working at the Fillmore East in New York. I went around and pitched it to some people, but they didn't want to do the kind of movie I wanted to make. They wanted it to be more of a broad comedy like *Airplane*, but set in a rock 'n' roll theater. So we tweaked the whole script into that. And maybe I'd like to go back and not do that. I'd make it closer to what I originally had in mind. Because though the movie's funny, I think it's a little hyper. It never really settles in on the characters as much as I would have liked. It's a movie with 5000 punch lines and only 2000 jokes. It's all over the place...a satire of rock concerts and of rock groups. Every band plays a different version of the same song. It's even kind of a rock critic's movie, movie making as rock criticism. But it is funny, and it was very difficult to make on its budget of five or six million dollars. It was a bonded movie, which means there's a group that watches you every day and makes sure you stay on schedule. There are penalties if you don't, so we pretty much rushed constantly and shot a whole movie in this theater. Then the company that made the movie decided—in the logic of these producers—it would make more money if it made *no* money. So they did the whole tax shelter thing with it.

DAM: So it was partly autobiographical... were the bands all based on specific groups and artists?

All of those characters are based on different musical archetypes. One of the things that kept the movie from being accepted was that people couldn't figure out why all these types of bands are playing the same show together! That aspect of live music had passed. Bill Graham and the Fillmore used to put on shows like that before the record companies and the marketing and the managers got into it. You'd see all these types of acts together. There'd be a blues band opening for a rock band and just these incredibly eclectic shows. I remember a Fillmore show with Miles Davis, The Steve Miller Band and Neil Young with Crazy Horse. Now, as a music fan, how much would you pay to see a show like that? It's unbelievable! Led Zeppelin played with Delaney & Bonnie and the Woody Herman Orchestra, y'know? Chuck Berry with The Who... it's inconceivable today. You go to some festival and see 30 bands and there's not that kind of variety. So that aspect of the movie, they didn't get. But it was my love of this music that inspired my affectionate satires of all these bands.

Punk rock plays really prominently into the film...

I had seen Iggy Pop several times. I loved his music and I'd seen him do some incredible stage dives. And then the kids in The Palladium started imitating him and jumping off the balcony! So that gave me the idea for the stage diving sequence. This was all stuff that I'd seen at rock concerts that I then took to the extreme. Like the girl holding up a lighter, and then she has a torch, and then a kid just sets himself on fire.

The character of Piggy was obviously inspired by Iggy and that whole aspect of rock music, which is basically to expose your raw feelings. So there were bands like The Germs, Black Flag and, to a certain degree, the Sex Pistols. Even some of the classic rock bands had a sense of danger about them. That's how I felt when I saw The Who. You never knew in the late '60s and early '70s if Keith Moon was going to get to the end of the song. There was so much energy coming off of the stage that it looked like they might explode. So that was the idea behind that.

I had always loved girl bands like The Go-Go's. In New York, they had a lot of shows that would have different female bands play together. But I just thought that it'd be funny to have one of these bands have this mascot like Piggy. We asked so many different bands to do it and everyone just flat out turned us down. Nobody would do it. We wanted Joan Jett and so many different people.

Eventually I ended up seeing a video by a band called Kid Creole and the Coconuts, and they had these great dancers and backup singers. One of them really stood out, and that turned out to be Lori Eastside, who's Nada in the movie. She had a lot of personality on stage and we just cast her out of nowhere. She came with her best friend, the two of them organized the Nada band and we did try-outs for the rest. Some of the girls were from bands and others were just hanging out in the rock scene.

We may have asked Iggy to play Piggy, but I'd seen Fear play and Lee Ving was perfect for the role. I asked Muddy Waters to be King Blues and he accepted, but then he had health problems and couldn't do it. Lou Reed was always the choice for Auden. We met with him, told him the story and he said yes.

The entire movie is so frenzied. Was it a brutal production?

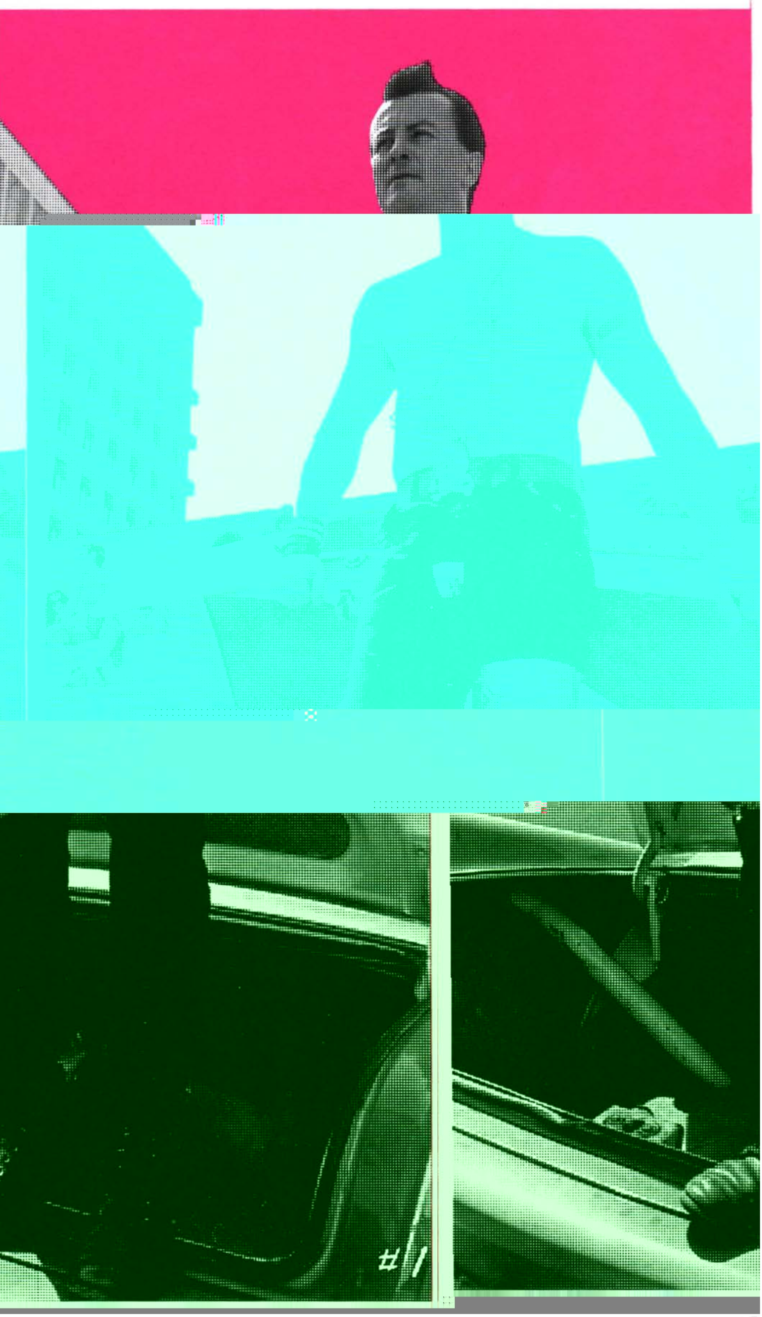
Everyone seemed to have a great time on the shoot but me [laughs]. I was working myself so hard. It was also a bit of a shock when Malcolm McDowell arrived—who was wonderful in the role—and he couldn't really sing. So he had to sort of recite his lyrics dramatically. I think the concert stuff was really exciting and f . The middle of the movie, when Nada's on stage, is just great because it's high energy and non-stop, just like the best concerts. And there are some of the more outrageous jokes, like The Jews Band, that I just really like a lot. It's not like any other movie...that's for sure.

LEE

Singer – FEAR; Self – *THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION;* "Piggy" – *GET CRAZY;* "Missoula" – *DUDES*

LV: It was 1977 or 1978 when I first went to see a show at The Masque in Hollywood. And that was on Los Palmas or Cherokee or one of those streets over there right off Hollywood Blvd., in this burnt-out old basement. What I saw was some of the bands that were playing at that time, and I noticed that as soon as they started, that the audience would start to thrash the daylights out of each other and were responding actively to what the bands were doing. So I thought to myself that I could put a band together that could play much better than these guys were; that almost everyone I'd ever heard that was called "punk rock" was doing. I sorta liked the Sex Pistols record: I thought it was a pretty good record, musically. I thought the Ramones were pretty good. I didn't hear almost anything else that I thought was OK.

But I saw the audience responding to what the bands were doing and that was unusual at the time. You know, people



were coming to see bands that were corporate, that had big record deals and all that. And they would sit there and talk, and talk to the waitress and all that kind of stuff. When these punk rock bands started to play, there was nothing to do but be involved in this crazy thing that was coming from right off the stage. It was really active involvement with the band. The audience was at least as much of the show as the band was.

I thought this was great, this was something new and I wanted a piece of it. I wanted to give and perform for this audience. I wanted to play for them because they were so happy and enthusiastic. So that's initially what made me want to do this thing that most people have called punk rock for want of any other name.

DAM: And you guys weren't together very long before you got approached by Penelope Spheeris to be part of her documentary.

We had been around about a year when we ran into Penelope. We were slamming up handbills in Laurel Canyon with a staple gun I had just bought and hoping to get a bunch of people to come to The Starwood to see one of our shows. And she comes tearin' ass down Laurel Canyon at about 80 miles an hour and stomps on the brake and backs up and says, "Hey, do you guys wanna be in my movie?" We said, "Sure." That was how that started. And by the time we did the film, we had been playing even longer in Hollywood. We had a good following and a really energetic audience response to what we were doing. Penelope liked that and she used the audience footage from our shows—one in Redondo Beach and one in the Culver City arena—she used our audience for some of the other bands who didn't have the good fortune to have a large, active crowd in front of them while they were doing their filming for Decline.

I assume there was some kind of premiere that you guys had to go to?

Yeah, the premiere was great. There were hundreds of cop cars. Way too many people were trying to get into the theater than the theater could fit. So, broken glass from the theater doors and lots and lots of cops on Hollywood Blvd. It was a real honor: sign of respect from the LAPD for the punk rock movement.

But they didn't shut down the show? They let it run?

onto the stage. If you don't lock your leg at the right time and they hit the trigger, your knee will be driven straight up and it will hit you in the jaw and knock you out cold. That's what happened to the guy who they were using before me. So, as he was being administered to by the health people on the set, he was coming around, he was still woozy and he said, "OK, it's your turn." So they put me on the damn thing, but I dug it, it was cool. I used to be a springboard diver when I was a kid and I like the idea that it would send you flying. And that's how we got a good shot out of that, and how I got back after I dive out into the crowd.

It was completely nuts. It was filmed at the Wiltern Theater, which was maybe like a ten-story theater building: an old, old theater on Wilshire Blvd. at Western in Los Angeles. What with all the actors—Lou Reed was in it, The Turtles were in it—you know I forget who all, Malcolm McDowell, this Icelandic actress named Anna Bjorn was in it, and she's just beautiful. It was a great film.

It'd been a while since you worked with Penelope Spheeris and then you ended up getting that role as Missoula in *Dudes*. Did she contact you and say she had a part and it's definitely for you? Or did your agent set that up? It just seems like you're so perfect for that role.

Yeah, it was great to work with her again. I think she had an idea that it would be a good part for me to do, it's something I knew about, and so it went very well. I liked playing that part.

That was the first time you got to play the lead action villain. In *Streets of Fire*, you're a maniac, but in this one you're the head of the gang.

Yeah, that's right. It was cool. There also was a lot of time spent in Cottonwood, A and Sedona—that's where we filmed most of it—and it was a good job.

And co-star Flea had been in your band...

Yeah, Flea was in Fear for two years.

Not many people get an opportunity to shoot an ex-bandmate in the face.

Yeah, that's right! "One in the brain-pan, boys..."

Do you have a favorite role? What are the movies that you really had the most fun doing?

Dudes was a perfect role for me. I really felt at home doing that. Also, SmiLr was a good first outing. You know, a lot of actors have to do things that are much different, or at least try to convince the people who are in a position to hire you that they'll be good at doing this thing that they know absolutely nothing about. Even when it hasn't been a part of their life experience whatsoever.

I got to make up almost the entirety of my dialogue in *Flashdance*—if you can call it that—because it just wasn't part of the experience of the people who were writing the story. The director and the other actors didn't really have a lot of information to draw upon about East Coast cities and tough neighborhoods. That's where I grew up, so it was easy for me to know what someone standing there hawking in front of one of the strip joints would say. That's why I enjoyed playing the part so much and that's why I think it worked out.

Ideally, would you continue to do the balance of playing in a band and taking acting roles?

Yeah, I would. I moved to Texas and I spent over ten years there, and that's far enough out of the way from LA and Hollywood that you pretty well get forgotten quickly if you're not able to be at a meeting or an audition in 20 minutes. So, it put a big crimp in my progression as an actor. But since I'm back living in Hollywood again now, I think that there will be more opportunities, and as they present, then I'll take advantage of them if they're interesting to me. I'm not out beating the sidewalks with a backseat full of scripts in my car the way that some do; calling the agent five times a day and trying to secure as many audition opportunities as possible. I'm very busy with Fear, so I don't do much of the other. But if something interesting comes up where I can offer a strong portrayal, I'll do it.

GHOSTBUSTERS

Dir. Ivan Reitman / 1984

A ghoul-infested Gotham gets some feel-good bustin'.

Just like any other small start-up business, Ghostbusters Inc. is struggling to attract clients. Despite their expertise and advanced scholarship, no one is buying their claims of supernatural extermination. In fact, they only have one job, looking into the possessed apartment building of beautiful cellist Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver). But when the desperate manager at a haunted upscale hotel calls them, they save the day and are soon media darlings with more business than they can shake a proton wand at.

They practice a humane catch-and-release style of extermination, stashing their post-mortem pests in a ghost containment grid. This system proves disastrous when the EPA shuts off their power and frees all its inhabitants. With the city in chaos, the mayor has no choice but to call upon the Ghostbusters, so the boys suit up and head over to the epicenter of the paranormal maelstrom: Dana's apartment building. As they pull up, they're greeted by cheers from barricaded bystanders, including the parties in an apparent punk rock double date, who stand on the stairs of the neighboring cathedral modeling multi-colored mohawks and swilling beer.

Ghostbusters has given so much to the world, i.e. one of the greatest movie villains of all time: The Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man. You also get Dr. Egon Spengler (Harold Ramis) declaring that print is dead about 20 years before that tragic phrase became another Internet banality. The only major blunder is part of a montage that shows Dr. Ray Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) being "serviced" by a phantasmal Stevie Nicks knockoff; it makes no sense and feels grossly out of place in an otherwise terrific film. (*LAF*)

GHOULIES 2

Dir. Albert Band / 1987

Low-budget gremlins take over a carnival.

A midway is on the verge of financial collapse. The powers-that-be w to boost their income by replacing the Satan's Den spook house with mud wrestling. This can now be seen as a metaphor for the movie's producer Charles Band, who later eschewed good old-fashioned horror/sci-fi films like this to fund anti-fun boobfests. Luckily for the viewer, the spook house stays until the end of the movie. The non-CGI effects for the ghoulies still look great, especially in the scene where the little spuds high five each other while an audience continuously chants the word "rats." Punks are scattered throughout the carnival crowds. Some wait patiently in line for rides. Others watch the belly dancers. A monster chases a man with a mohawk in the film's thrilling, creature-filled climax. Music by "Fuzzbee Morse"?!! (BC)

GIMME AN 'F'

Dir. Paul Justman | 1984

Things get a little crazy at Camp Beaver View.

A SEXY, SPIRITED, SASSY ROMP!

A cheerleading film with plenty o' cheerleading. Wait a minute... this was written and directed by men. What could they possibly know about this subject? This film has the best man-dancing-in-the-shower-in-his-underwear scene ever. It will make women hot and men question their sexuality. Rad Roscoe is a punk cheerleader with blue and red hair, a tom shin with "Captain America" written on the chest and speedos with a target on the butt. Sometimes he loses his punk style and just chills normal, but about halfway through the film he goes entirely *Mad Max*, sporting shoulder pads, wielding a crossbow and spiking his hair into a red mohawk. To impress a female, he punches himself in the face and spits up blood. She licks the blood from his chin and hwn ps him in the bushes. Jan Hammer did the score and the soundtrack features songs by Toni Basil and a very early Red Hot Chili Peppers. (BC)

GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN

Dir. Alan Metler | 1985

Two young ladies dance their way into the halls of Chicago public access television legend.

Like all Catholic schoolgirls, Janey (Sarah Jessica Parker) and Lynne (Helen Hunt) are obsessed with Velcro, Van Halen and neon jazzercise programs. When *Dance* TV s dead-eyed British host announces that the series is auditioning new performers, the girls buck their uptight parents and head straight for the tryouts. Every teen in Chicago is on hand, sporting barely-terrestrial fashion magic including spiked afros, Santa fringe, stuffed spandex, exploded denim and countless other visual felonies. Post-adolescent Maggie (Shannen Doherty) even shows up in new wave lightning makeup and is mistaken for both a punk and an attractive woman. Janey's fearless acrobatics lead her to the finals, where stuffy youth socialite princess Natalie (Holly Gagnier) is determined to sabotage the contest.

The tables are turned when the girls Xerox the invitations to Natalie's debutante ball. What follows is a deeply inspired montage as they roam the gaudiest downtown haunts, distributing invites to dozens of the most hideous rainbow-spiked skeezes and mutants they can find. Every alley, diner and retail store is suddenly and inexplicably bursting with style maniacs, as goth librarian ensembles collide head-on with spazzed out transvestite innovations. Each of them is overjoyed to attend the soiree, including a quartet of monolithic bodybuilders who help out after a street warrior in a Social Distortion jacket knocks Janey to the concrete.

At the ball, the formal proceedings are rudely interrupted when a No-Rules delinquent in ninja gear does a double flip cannonball through the country club's plate glass window. The floodgates opened, an infinite stream of nukeoid ragers invade, transforming Natalie's Special Day into a holocaust of punk chaos and synchronized pogo mayhem. At one point, things get so epically our of control that one supercharged crasher straps on a guitar, leaps up on the buffet table and stampedes across with his sneaker shoved in a turkey. TRULY outrageous.

Later, dreams are realized and true love is found. But as none of those scenes involve new wave youths unleashed, they could have stopped shooting at the turkey shoe scene and just given this morh-e r ck ten Oscars. (ZC)

ALAN METTER

Director – *GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN*

AM: It was my first feature film. I had done some music videos that the executives at New World had seen. One of these things was called "Rappin' Rodney" with Rodney Dangerfield [laughs]. They'd been looking for directors for a couple projects and they came to me with this one, saying they wanted the female *Footloose*. They'd picked up the script, which was a dance movie that had been put in turnaround by Paramount. New World bought it and separately bought the song, and they put the song together with the script. The producer Chuck Russell and I reshaped it into what it is.

DA: The punk scenes come out of nowhere and are completely overpowering.

Punk was a huge movement at the time, so little innocent kids were trying to be punks. We incorporated that in with Shannen Doherty's character. For the big punk scene, we used real punk kids with their various styles to disrupt the villainess' coming out party. We went around Melrose Avenue in LA, which was the center for that cultural phenomenon. There were a lot of kids walking around Melrose with spiked hair and mohawks. I mean, none of this stuff has changed, really. We freaked out our parents with

Elvis Presley, and later these kids had to go further just to alienate their parents.

Those weren't actors...you used actual punks as extras, right?

We were very low budget so everything had to be done on the cheap. They all wanted to be in the movie, we bused them out to Pasadena where we were shooting in this hotel for the party scene, put in breakaway glass for where the punked up stuntman does a flip through the window. He got cut too. Besides him, all the rest were kids we just grabbed from the street. There was a dance number in there, but those were mostly professional dancers that were just made to look like punks. So stuff like that was scripted, but other things just happened during the shoot. We had the banquet table all set and I saw this turkey sitting there, so I told the kid playing the guitar to stick his foot in the back of the turkey and then hop down the table with the turkey on his shoe. That was a moment of inspiration.

GLEAMING THE CUBE

Dir. Graeme Clifford / 1989

Christian Slater stars as Brian, a skater who must bring vengeance upon the Vietnamese gunrunners who killed his adopted brother.

Gleaming the Cube was one of the first films Hollywood made in the attempt to transform a sport (this one being skateboarding) into a heinous, bastardized action movie. While the film is ultimately godawful, it does have its sparkling moments, mainly in the form of its star-studded non-actor cast. A notable appearance by Tony Hawk as Brian's friend/Pizza Hut delivery boy, along with other members of skateboarding's Bones Brigade injected into the roster, was surely a conscious attempt by the filmmakers at giving the feature some much-needed street cred. This was probably enough to satisfy most of the 10-16-year old kids (myself included) who saw *Gleaming the Cube* when it was initially released.

Along with the pro skaters, I was also hooked by the seemingly rebellious Brian, who fit my idea of what punk teenage thrashers were supposed to be like: spiky bleached hair, dangly cross earrings, ripped jeans and an affinity for McRad on the ol' Walkman. At the time of *Gleaming*'s release, there was much ado about any major studio film where the lead character has a Cramps poster on his bedroom wall. Though he didn't fit the classic '80s "skate-punk" description (akin to the more flamboyantly attired Daggers in *Thrashin'*), Brian fits the bill perfectly as a snotty teen from the suburbs. On the other hand, he also serves as a prototype for what many could consider the mall-punk archetype. Fortunately for us, any type of punk association with sports rigidly ends with skateboarding; Dennis Rodman doesn't count. (*AT*)

GOING BERSERK

Dir. David Steinberg / 1983

A happy-go-lucky drummer/limo driver gets hypnotized by a religious cult, turning him into a sleeper assassin pre-programmed to kill his soon-to-be father-in-law.

While sporadically funny, *Going Berserk* is yet another under-realized film starring the late John Candy. As an *SCTV* fan, *Going Berserk* is even more of a bummer for me because the Candyman is joined by two of his co-stars from the great Canadian comedy series, and neither Joe Flaherty or Eugene Levy get to do much. The only funny thing Flaherty's main character does is bring a whore to a dinner party! As a matter of fact, for a movie directed by a comedian and featuring a cast of funny people like Paul Dooley (who was in the vastly superior *SCTV* movie *Strange Brew* the same year), Richard Libertini, Kurtwood Smith, Dixie Carter and Pat Hingle, *Going Berserk* fumbles nearly every opportunity, seems severely underwritten, belabors unfunny jokes and scores pretty low on the laughs-per-minute meter.

John Bourgignon (Candy) is a busy man. He runs a limousine service with his pal Chick (Flaherty), plays drums for an alleged band, is engaged to the daughter of an important congressman, performs in kung fu films directed by his sleazy friend Sal (Levy) and is the target of a sinister religious cult that employs brainwashing techniques. The cult leader hypnotizes John, causing our hero to turn into a "killer or a schmuck" whenever he sees the five of spades, thus setting him up as the perfect assassin. But the *Manchurian Candidate*-inspired plot is an excuse to loosely connect a series of comic scenes that only occasionally relate to the overall assassination motif.

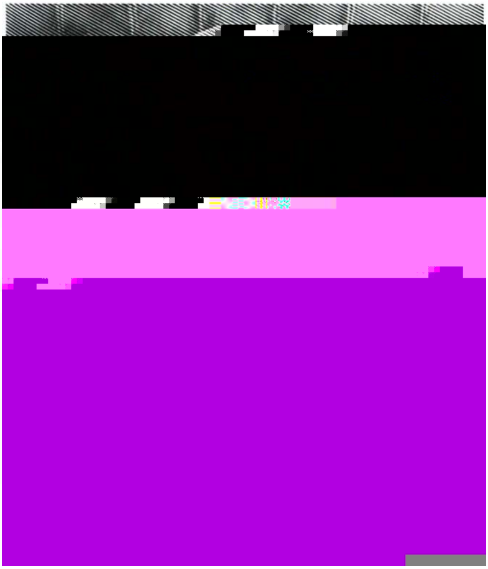
A few of the vignettes just feel like *SCTV* sketches as Candy and Flaherty portray other characters in isolated scenarios. One is the simple but perfectly executed *Kung Fu U*, a chopsocky parody with sped-up fight scenes and hilarious dubbed dialogue. Another is a *Father Knows Best*/*Leave It to Beaver* tribute. Some bits are desperately unfunny, like John driving The Mexican Beatles around town. Some are sort-of funny, like John slipping into "schmuck" mode and getting all potty-mouthed. And a few are flat-out genuinely funny, like an extended scene where John gets handcuffed to Jerome Willy Muhammed (the underrated Ernie Hudson) and endures some very humiliating situations. But the main reason you'd want to watch *Going Berserk* comes about 50 minutes in, when John goes to a diner called Mom's, where a dozen full-on punks are enthusiastically getting down to a song from the jukebox ("Mom is Dead," a very rare track featuring vocals by Lee Ving!). This severely irks a group of bikers, one of whom breaks the jukebox and calls the punks "purple-headed faggots." John intervenes and the punks call him a "fucking hippie" while the bikers spraypaint "SORRY" on his shirt. He replies by giving the peace sign, a big smile and words of love, but on his way out he intentionally knocks over the bikers' motorcycles! What a crazy nut! (*SH*)

THE GOLDEN CHILD

Dir. Michael Ritchie / 1986

A wise-cracking urbanite becomes embroiled in high stakes Eastern mysticism.

Los Angeles. Where Volkswagen convertibles cruise the streets with miniature Statues of Liberty in their back seats. Where crusties with foot-tall spiked hair roam free. Where businessmen peruse the latest issue of *Chunky Asses* at public newsstands. In this fallen paradise, Chandler Jarrell (Eddie Murphy) is a tracker of kidnapped children. He's approached by a mysterious woman who declares him The Chosen One, pre-destined to save The Golden Child who's been imprisoned by supernatural forces. Chandler reluctantly takes the assignment and must face bikers, monkey-men, snake women, Tibetan death walks, airborne demons and bloody oatmeal. (*ZC*)



GOOD-BYE CRUEL WORLD

Dir. David Irving / 1983

Rodney (Dick Shawn) is a TV reporter who has given up
on life due to too many depressing news stories.

Filmed in "Choice-A-Rama," the audience is allowed to choose what happens next. This is just a gag gimmick done for cheap laffs. I know this because I kept choosing that the movie end and it wouldn't.

Rodney visits his sister in preparation for his suicide. Young nephew Kevin shows up in a punk-filled station wagon with "Only A Lad" and "Slash" spraypainted on the side. The boy has blue hair and a pierced cheek. His friends yell, "See you later, homo!" and drive off. The zinger? The teens were up all night studying for their SATs.

Later on, Rodney stumbles into his nephew's room, which is covered with flyers for Fear shows. Kevin has changed into a Sex Pistols shirt and is doing lines of coke off his Trapper Keeper. He recites the following poem:

"The moon is an eyeball
Watching the sun fall
As it burns the earth.
While God, the Nero of the universe,
Plays his trombone.
Alone.
In E flat."

(BC)

GOROTICA

Dir. Hugh Gallagher / 1993

A diamond heist goes wrong and a thief is shot.
His body is then hidden by a female goth necrophile.

A shot-on-video movie dedicated to Mr. Anthony Perkins that's sort of similar to *Nekromantik*, but with more of a made-for-public-access aesthetic. The first scene has the goth girl masturbating on a bed while watching clips of actual homicide scenes. She rubs a skull on her yodel patch. Throughout the film, she's usually undressed or close to it. One of the two robbers is a greasy punk with a stud jacket and torn jeans, credited as "Dingo" Jones. In the end, he shaves his hair into a mohawk and pours gasoline on his head. The corpse is possibly the film's best actor, not even squirming as his nipple is pierced with a safety pin. The goth girl has a gay friend who wears a cape and has AIDS. Industrial soundtrack by Drain and White Slug. (BC)

GOTCHA!

Dir. Jeff Kanew / 1985

A horn ball college student is so saturated with rejection that
he must venture to Europe in order to score some sex.

A fine example of American celluloid imperialism and arrogance. The lines are drawn in black and white in this film; Americans have carte blanche as all of Europe is stuffed with either:

A) pretentious prudes
...or...
B) fascist pigs

This glut of propaganda is awkwardly framed by the weekend survivalist paintball fad, and apparently the filmmakers decided that semi-sport crazes, horny college students and a "USA! USA!" mentality didn't provide enough material to make a feature-length film, so we also get a soggy, half-baked spy thriller mixed into the red, white and blue glop. Which begs the question: if they can do this, why not a movie about such fine backyard water slides/torture devices as the Crocodile Mile or the Wet Banana? I know there's a movie out there somewhere about oversexed frat brothers trying to raise money to save the local strip bar by way of a backyard water park; it's probably called "*Slip 'n Slide*."

Anyways, hopeless nerd Jonathan (Anthony Edwards) goes to Europe to bag some chicks after striking out in the land of the free (though his hot-blooded, Hispanic Don Juan roommate is never lacking for female companionship), and in the process he gets mixed up with husky-voiced spy Sasha (Linda Fiorentino). Highlights of the subsequent monkey business include: Jonathan flipping the bird to ALL of East Berlin; ordering tons of food at a foreign Burger King (adding the prefix "American" before each food item, i.e., "American" chocolate shake, "American" fries, etc.) as a respite from the primitive and draconian European environment; and of course his run-in with some German new wave stereotypes.

Besides Sasha's spy cohorts, these punks are the only Europeans in the film that are portrayed in any kind of positive light (they smuggle Jonathan back into East Berlin by giving him a righteous new wave makeover), and even this characterization is conditional. While the punks are European, they are obsessed with American culture, particularly of the Southern California variety. The fact that they emulate and worship the U.S. distinctly marks them as outsiders in Berlin, and is therefore in line with the agenda of the film. The creators are so determined in casting Berlin as a vast cultural wasteland (besides the aforementioned Burger King, naturally) that they break the Hollywood tradition of portraying punks as symbols of a society's moral decay.

The paintball angle is such a gimmick, and so visibly tacked on, I'm not going to make any effort to explain how and why it is pertinent to plot. Let's just say the grand finale involves a tranquilizer gun, the C.I.A., and hopping-mad commies. If any of these plot points piques your interest, run into your local video store and yell, "Gotcha!!" (SC)

GRAVEYARD SHIFT

aka CENTRAL PARK DRIFTER

Dir. Jerry Ciccoritti / 1987

A cab-driving vampire teaches a dying woman
the meaning of friendship.

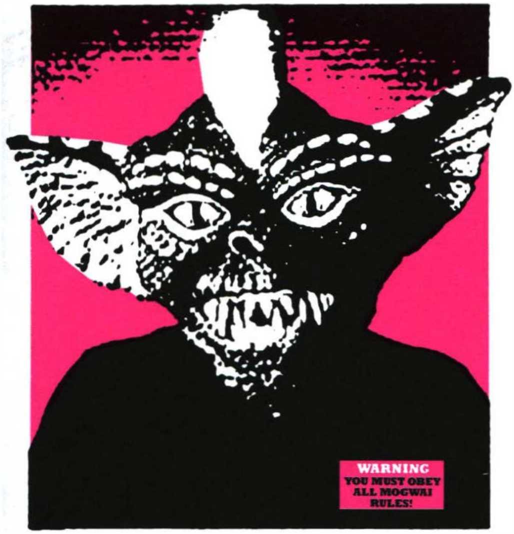
An early installment in the No-Budget Tortured Erotic Vampire genre that would later include undead duds like *Pale Blood*, *Club Vampire* and *Nick Knight*. Struggling music-video director Michelle tires of her philandering husband (*Class of 1984*'s Neil Clifford) and falls for taxi man Stephen. Though he's a genuinely pleasant guy, he enjoys sucking the blood of beautiful women, specifically by gnawing on their left boob. Michelle learns she has only months to live and embarks on a sensuous journey into vampiric obsession, much to the viewer's chagrin. In one scene, Stephen is mugged and shot by a Ramones-

In one scene, Stephen is mugged and shot by
In one scene, Stephen is mugged and shot by
scene, Stephen is mugged and shot by
mugged and shot by

WHAP!
POW!
WHAP!
PHTT!

are perfect stand-ins for your average acne-ridden teen puberty punk: reptilian, grotesque and awkward. As the gremlins gestate in their oozing pods, the local science teacher comments on how they're changing in appearance and makeup within their cocoons. In essence, adolescence is upon them. While the creatures appear to be sexless, they exhibit all the behavior of pubescent teen punks: they hate fruits and vegetables (while relentlessly devouring junk food), morals and the sanctity of life. In one extended sequence, Billy's mom has an epic battle with Gizmo's bastard offspring in her kitchen. Using a TV tray as a shield and a steak knife as her saber, mom fights tirelessly to uphold the family values and convenience of her modern kitchen. The Gremlins are literally destroyed by consumer products—those soul-sucking totems of the free-market economy—as they fall one by one to Mom's knife, blender and the ultimate symbol of '80s middle class drudgery: the microwave. The Gremlins have no recourse but violence in the stifling atmosphere of Kingston Falls. Gizmo, the progenitor of the creatures, has his innocence symbolically martyred as he's affixed to a dartboard and used as a target.

Unsurprisingly, the monsters' ringleader has a prominent white mohawk, which garners him the nickname "Stripe." He's the instigator of these id-driven beasts who have nothing but disdain for the townspeople and their rigid lives. When Stripe self-reproduces in the YMCA pool, iconoclasm abounds. He escapes from Billy's home, pauses by the window and deliberately blows his nose on the lily-white curtains before leaping to his freedom. Later, two ineffectual cops survey the chaos and witness Santa being consumed by Gremlins. The ultimate Gremlins-as-punks statement comes when gruesome justice is meted out on the town's ultimate authoritarian, Mrs. Deagle (Polly Holliday), the bitter harpy who owns the bank. Stripe's status as punk prince is solidified when he delivers the film's most iconic image; in the film's conclusion, he wheels down the aisle of a department store on a skateboard, arms loaded with candy, mohawk stark and upright. At this moment, he encapsulates the irreverence and downright devil-may-care attitude of punk.



The Gremlins have no respect for the environment that fostered them. Nothing and no one is exempt from their wrath. Not the cops, not the straight-laced kids or their parents, and especially not Christmas. They truly live the chaos. And in doing so, they also live the dream for many suburb-bound teens, whiling away the hours in bedrooms across the nation, plotting their revenge. (*SC*)

GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH

Dir. Joe Dante / 1990

Li'l beasts get urban.

Gizmo the mogwai and his human pals have relocated to Manhattan, where Billy and Kate (Zach Galligan and Phoebe Cates, reprising their roles) now hold proper adult jobs. During a routine water fountain repair, Gizmo is sprayed and immediately spawns additional furballs. As with the last film, the leader of these second generation runts bears a white mohawk, though his behavior is decidedly less punk than Stripe's in the last installment (see review). However, as he and his spazzoid colleagues gluttonize a Penguin's Frozen Yogurt kiosk, a plump, disheveled, pin-wearing punk can be seen for a split second awaiting her chocolate swirl. The rest of the film unfolds at a manic pace, with bold variations on the beloved monstrosities, including a lightning Gremlin, a verbose intellectual mutation and even one that transforms into a massive tarantula creature while Slayer's "Angel of Death" blares. Director Dante's flair for cartoonish excitement is matched by his appreciation of the flawless character work of Dick Miller, Robert Picardo and Christopher Lee. Though not a box office barnburner in the U.S., the sequel was a sensation in Japan, and *Gremlins 2* puffy stickers were available in Tokyo toy stores through the mid-2000s. (*ZC*)

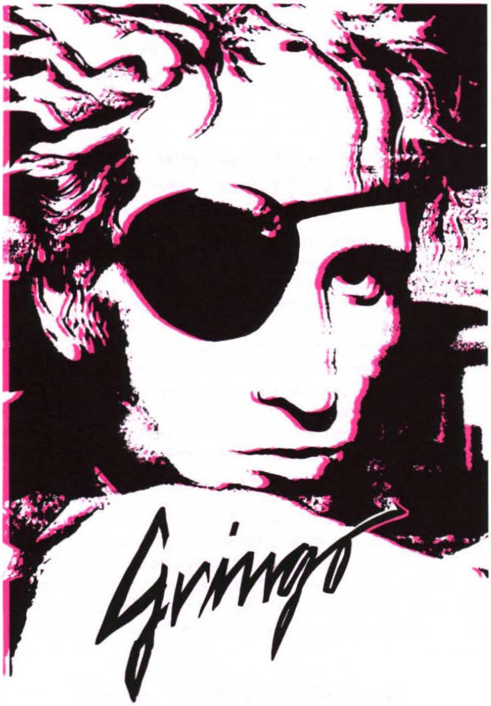
GRINGO: STORY OF A JUNKIE

Dir. Lech Kowalski / 1984

A pseudo-documentary in which junkie and East Village-scenester John Spacely goes about his routine.

Released by unlikely distributor Troma during a period when they were buying up arthouse flicks with exploitation potential (they'd just distributed Buddy Giovinazzo's *Combat Shock* a year earlier), Kowalski's pseudo-documentary about punk scenester/heroin addict Spacely is a street-level masterpiece of junkie cinema. *Gringo* (its title explained only by the theme song and some wall graffiti) was one of the first films to show real heroin use in graphic detail, from repeated injection to blood-filled sinks and syringes; Spacely shoots up before the opening credits have even finished rolling. He then goes cruising through the nighttime streets of New York's East Village, passing other desperate junkies who call out in panic for the missing component to their daily fix ("Works! Works! Works! Works!").

Via narration, Spacely expounds on the mechanics of the deal and the nature and patterns of addiction while going about his daily life, which includes skateboarding and reading comic books. Certain scenes are staged to propel the loose narrative forward (a mugging and a shooting), but all the heroin scenes are quite real. The film's only drawback is that it's grossly underlit, no doubt due to the need to film the real lives of people who live in dark places, and in some cases don't want to be seen. But Spacely emerges as an interesting and sympathetic character—a one-time longhaired idealist whose life was touched by a tragedy that prompted his immersion into the escapist world of addiction.



The soundtrack is exclusively early '80s hip-hop (Grandmaster Flash, Children of Paradise, a bit of P-Funk alum Bernie Worrell), with an original score by era session-player Chuck Kentis. In fact, there's nothing remotely punk about the film's score, unless you consider the substantial crossover between the punk and hip-hop scenes that existed at the time in downtown NYC. Glenn O'Brien's public access show *TV Party* was a perfect example of how New York's punk and avant-garde scene adopted and endorsed hip-hop, and Cinema of Transgression founder Nick Zedd champions hip-hop and rap in his early writings as "the music of the future." But Spacely's connection to the punk scene would also be established in Alex Cox's 1986 film *Sid and Nancy*, where he had a small role as a Chelsea hotel resident (the films' respective release schedules saw *Sid and Nancy* hit screens first), and *Born to Lose*, Kowalski's 1999 doc about former New York Dolls guitarist Johnny Thunders. (*KJ*)

GROTESQUE

Dir. Joe Tornatore / 1988

Five punks hold a rural family hostage, but a hidden door
in the house hides a deformed young man who
breaks free to exact revenge.

The stunt coordinator of *Sweet Jesus, Preacherman* directed this steaming slab of misguided horror-punk genius several years after its cast or content was relevant.

Lisa (Linda Blair) runs afoul of "a vicious band of slavering, mindless punkers" (that's straight from the video box) while en route to her parents' mountain retreat. Though warned by the locals to "leave them freaks be," she manages to piss them off before making it to the family homestead. Later, the spastic junkyard outcasts break in by moonlight and corral the family in the living room. Spiky blond leader Scratch sucks on Dad's beard while his girlfriend humps the couch and makes chimpanzee sounds. When it becomes clear that the family has no cash on hand, the maniacs begin killing. They split up to search the house for anything worth burgling, but end up having sex in skull masks or standing in corners instead. One punk spends over a full minute of screen time trying to get a corpse to give him five.

Meanwhile, Lisa escapes and heads barefoot up the snowy mountainside, just as the villains accidentally set her deformed hunchback brother free from his secret dungeon behind the TV set. Blind with anger, he takes first victim Robert Z'Dar, the hypermasculine giant who played the title character in the *Maniac Cop* trilogy (though for some reason, Z'Dar chose to be credited in this film as "Bunki Z"). The raging vengeance-creature then mercilessly stalks the punks through the snow until only two are left.

At this halfway point, Lisa's uncle Rod (seasoned Hollywood backlotter Tab Hunter) arrives with the police and the film shifts into an awkward eye-for-an-eye picture. A scene where an inarticulately Dutch-sounding cop interrogates the surviving punks seems to drag on for hours. Finally, Uncle Rod gets his hands on the leather-clad criminals and deals out some first-degree surgical retribution...

Some versions of the video (including the European DVD) contain a bonus twist that was edited out of later editions. Those of you who enjoy a good VHS horror treat have endured some outrageous surprises. However, I *guarantee* that the double-zinger awaiting you at the end of this film is the most unbelievably ridiculous you'll ever encounter. I actually watched it twice the next day to make sure it wasn't a dream. If anyone out there can find something that tops this, I'll personally mail you a Xerox of a five-dollar bill. (*ZC*)

THE GUMSHOE KID

Dir. Joseph Monduke / 1990

A young man obsessed with detective films takes
a crack at being a real private eye.

Reruns of stale jokes abound in this slap-crappy attempt at entertainment. Jay Underwood just doesn't work as the ambitious but wet-behind-the-ears title character. Now if Eddie Deezen or someone with true comic presence filled his shoes, then maybe this could've started cooking. Miguel Sandoval and Biff Yeager from *Repo Man* appear, but the only person who uses his screen time to full effect is Xander Berkeley. Another Alex Cox regular with over 170 roles under his belt, this character actor puts everyone else to shame by giving his all in a little part as a slimy bookie.

The junior detective has to go undercover with his new ladyfriend. She wants a disguise that's "discreet yet meaningful," while he'd like to lay low with style. So naturally they get punk makeovers. Our star has the top of his head molded into a red-dyed coif with blue streaks on the side. She colors her bangs blue, which complements her orange new wave makeup. This leads into a montage of them trying to find clothes to match their new look; she settles on hippie garb, while he picks a modest suit and bow tie. They then decide to take themselves out for a fancy dinner...No Rules! *The Gumshoe Kid* is truly a limp dick. (*BC*)

HACK-O-LANTERN

Dir. Jag Mundhra / 1988

Metal-fueled Satanism raises a ruckus.

HACK-O-LANTERN

Young Tommy is visited by his grandfather (Hy Pyke), a devil-worshipping pumpkin salesman who bestows upon him a powerful amulet. Fifteen years later, the boy has grown into a rock-obsessed junior hellmaster, still under the thumb of his oppressive, occult grandpap. Tommy's misanthropic individuality is illustrated by his distaste for shirts, a pickled fetus shrine, Dio-flavored voodoo hallucinations and—last but not least—a *Dead End Drive-In* movie poster featuring a close-up glamour shot of one of the Australian film's key punks. His girlfriend is a platinum-topped sleazoid whose "butt tattoo" is a matter of much local public discussion.

While the powers of darkness rise, the town's unwitting teens stage their annual Halloween dance. Party metal band Mercenaries tootle out lily-weak jams, and attendees' costumes include soldier-with-head-wound, lady-with-salad-bowl-hat, lady-with-no-clothing-at-all and (of course) the anticipated punk get-up. The latter is worn by the repulsive young town drunk, whose ensemble consists of spiked hair, chains, torn sleeves and a plastic prop knife in the chest. He tries to demonstrate Party Power by crushing a tin can against his forehead, but manages to blow even that basic task. Meanwhile, a mysterious killer in occult robes lays waste to the most promiscuous members of the local teen scene.

Like so many movies of its era, *Hack-O-Lantern* is a triumph of limited means. The gore is powerfully presented, the production quality is inexplicably strong, and a few of the performances are worthy of some kind of award. Well, one anyway, courtesy of camera-lovin' superham Hy Pyke; a bargain-basement spazz who unleashed similar gumption via small roles in equally discounted features *Slithis* and *Lemora: A Child's Tale of the Supernatural*. As the satanic, incest-obsessed Grandpa, Pyke is given his first starring role and takes it to an illogical zenith, playing every syllable and facial twitch for the back row of the straight-to-video living room audience. (*ZC*)

HACKERS

Dir. Iain Softley / 1995

Wimpy cyperpunks draw power from techno,
dial-up modems and rollerblades.

Dade Murphy (Jonny Lee Miller), aka Crash Override, is a teenage computer prodigy, hacking into remote computer systems for the thrill of watching 3D equations float around on his screen. While it might seem stupid to risk imprisonment for something that could easily be replicated by a Windows screensaver, for him, it's totally worth it.

In real life, Dade is starting his senior year at a new high school, which is where he meets Kate Libby (Angelina Jolie), to whom he is tenaciously attracted. His big chance with her comes when she throws a party at her mom's luxe penthouse, which is wall-to-wall with spandexed hussies and dancing punks. While admiring her computer gear, he finds out that Kate is Acid Burn, his online arch rival. Twist!

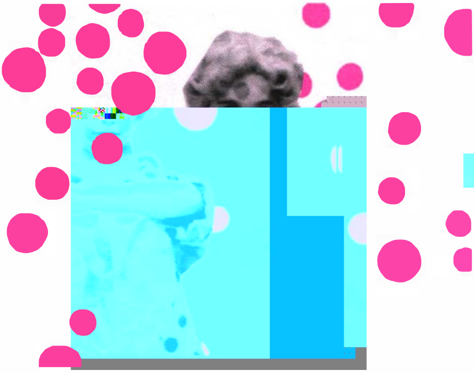
Dade and Kate are forced to put their differences aside to fight a powerful turncoat hacker who wants to use them to cover his own corporate crimes. At risk of being megapwned, they go to a dance club to seek the help of two prominent techno-whiz outlaws; dodging a puffy cotton candy mohawk and bleached spikes galore on their way through the pogo-crazy crowd. A distress call is put out and soon tech support agents, geeks and punks from across the world rally to help them expose the true villain.

In an all-around obnoxious supporting cast, Matthew Lillard deserves special recognition for his SPECTACULARLY irritating performance as a shit-sandwich hippie stoner/techie raver hybrid. At an "elite hacker" meeting, he lazily slurs through a paranoid rant while a green mohawked statue looks on helplessly. The plot is dull and, due to the technology upon which it relies so heavily, the movie was outdated before it was ever even released. Sure, some people might get a laugh from the references to beepers, floppy disks and blazing fast 28.8 mpbs modems, but actual human beings should stay far away. (*LAF*)

HAIL THE NEW PURITAN

Dir. Charles Atlas / 1986

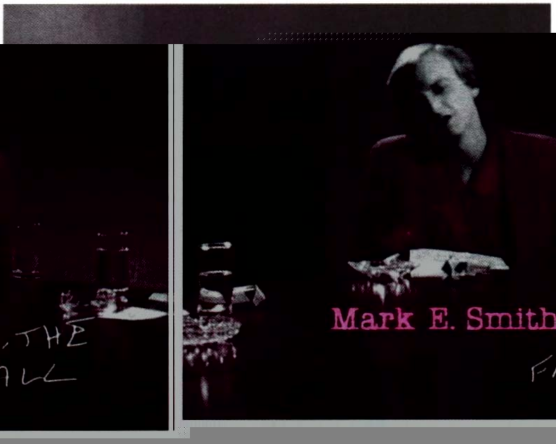
Michael Clark swings, The Fall sings and
Leigh Bowery brings the bling. Schwing!!!!



In a game of word association, if the word "ballet" is heard, the first thing to fall out of most peoples' mouths would be "stuffy." Certainly not "bare-assed," "Marilyn Monroe wig," "wolfing down a platter of roast chicken" and most definitely not "Mark E. Smith." Therein lies the genius of Michael Clark, who was once called "the man who made ballet cool."

Hail The New Puritan, directed by Charles Atlas (a specialist in cheeky art films dealing with dance and performance), is a hazy "docufantasy" account of a day in the life of Scottish-born choreographer/hoofer Clark, who single-handedly knocked the staid world of ballet off its axis in the mid-1980s with his loud, punky, kinky, hyper-colorful and unusually-clothed dance works. The film frames some of Clark's volcanic dance numbers against the backdrop of his life in a giddy underground UK scene populated with freaks, malcontents, club kids, drag queens, regular queens and the mighty Fall.

In 1984, Clark used the music of The Fall as the backing tracks for his stage production *New Puritans*, and this film displays some of that handiwork, with its mesmerizing dance sequences taking place on garishly-decorated soundstages. The players are alternately garbed in Scooby-Doo suits, polka dots, David Bowie-style oversized formal attire, Oktoberfest lederhosen, body paint, hobo wear and stretchy tights with the asses cut out. There's only about 15 solid minutes' worth of Fall content in the film, but for the band's fetishists, these dance interludes are like holy scripture. The savory crunch of the group's signature churning collides perfectly with Clark's stylized modern moves and legendary gonzo fashion designer Leigh Bowery's ultra-cartoonish get-ups. There's also a short nicotine-soaked "round table" segment in which Fall vocalist Mark E. Smith, his wife/bandmate Brix Smith and Clark babble poetically in MES-speak drawn from pre-written statements lying on the desks in front of them.



The rest of the film is a mishmash of styles and levels of engagement; interview footage and other dance routines (set to music by Glenn Branca and Wire member Bruce Gilbert) are occasionally surrounded with some seriously dull bits of business that have nothing to do with Clark. One reviewer mentions: "Throughout, Atlas intersperses shots of London streets, following a wandering young man who embodies the dispossessed Britain." Uh-hu. Whatever. Things do pick up in the last third, when we meet Leigh Bowery and his hilarious, never-ending costume changes, and when we get a taste of Clark's party-train nightclubbing scene.

Many of the goings-on in the film that attempt to be spontaneous are clearly staged, but it's a testament to Atlas that he manages to make even the most obviously constructed moments absorbing. Clark is incredibly charismatic throughout, maintaining an engaging "leader of the pack" stance while saying little, which also goes a long way toward any audience member's flagging interest in the film.

Other highlights include: Clark wearing one of the greatest T-shirts in human history (declaring on its front "Beat Me/Bite Me/Whip Me/Fuck Me"); Clark later covering most of those bases in a hookup with a random dude; the astounding opening credit sequence dance number; and a guest appearance by the gender-bending Lanah Pellay (occasional Fall collaborator and star of the 1987 cannibal comedy *Eat The Rich*, which features appearances by Lemmy and Hugh Cornwell!).

After *Hail The New Puritan*, Clark went on to further collaborate with The Fall on *I Am Curious, Orange* (a controversial late-'80s theater piece involving the centuries-old Dutch monarch William of Orange, more bare butts, giant cheeseburgers on wheels and The Fall as live orchestra). He also nurtured a fab smack addiction and dropped out of the spotlight, only to reemerge with wiser, more restrained dance work in the new millennium, although not without the beloved bare-assing. The Fall, of course, went through 2,700 lineup changes, released almost as many albums, and continue to this day under the iron fist of MES. (BB)

HALF-COCKED

Dir. Suki Hawley / 1994

A deliberately disaffected, dramatized peep at
the mid-'90s Midwest indie rock life.

Shaggy-haired Louisville frowners crash on fetid punk house couches, moan about minimum wage jobs and make big plans to do nothing. The protagonists are a group of listless unlikeables who find their only joy when bumming food or spots on basement show guest lists. The central grump in this crew is Tara, a chronic mumbler with obscuring bangs whose brother fronts fashionable pout-n-strut band The Guilloteens, played to type by ian Svenonius, David Pajo and other painfully vain sorts. Tara and her fiends steal the group's van and head off on an aimless adventure, masquerading as an experimental band and clearing out venues. Despite their falsehoods and migraine-inducing squall, they manage to make allies of other musicians and even trade vans to see their antimusical quest through to its inevitable collapse.

This black-and-white dose of video Valium was clearly a labor of love, but it's hard to understand how people this devoted to lazy despondency could muster the drive to complete a feature film. The cast includes members of bands from the soundtrack, including Rodan and The Grifters. Other songs are provided by Unwound, Smog, Versus and more of the era's mixtape legends. (ZC)

HALF JAPANESE: THE BAND THAT WOULD BE KING

Dir. Jeff Feuerzeig / 1993

A large-scale appreciation of primal rock
pioneers Half Japanese.

When brothers Jad & David Fair started playing in their living room in the mid-'70s, they could barely get critics to listen to their chaotic recordings. This documentary - made two decades later - explores the ambition and innovation of a band that has maintained its credibility and prolific output since the very beginning. The Fairs are interviewed, as well as their unexpectedly proud parents, fellow musicians, label representatives and stunned rock writers. David once said the band's arguably "punk" output can be divided into two classifications: Love Songs and Monster Songs, and both are well represented here. In video footage from 1985'S *Live from Hell*, the group plays a spirited set in a hand-drawn cave while skeletons dance to the beat. They later perform for the residents of a retirement community, with one of the grandpas tootling along on a harmonica. Everyone from Penn & Teller's Penn Jillette to music historian Byron Coley to longtime collaborator Maureen "Moe" Tucker of Velvet Underground gives scathing, anti-MTV rants on how Half Japanese is both crucial and criminally overlooked. (ZC)

HANGIN' OUT

Dir. Wolfgang Büld / 1983

Transnational teen romance.

German new wave pop sensation Nena rhymingly portrays Tina, a disenchanted high schooler fresh out of a failed relationship with arrogant bumper car operator Tino. She convinces heartsick classmate Robbie (radio star Markus) to run away with her on his scooter. Her dog is left in the care of class punk Andy, a likeable, chain-snacking, painted-hair goof in a leather jacket emblazoned with "FUCK" and "NO FUTURE." He promises to feed the pooch two corn dogs daily.

[redacted]

On their journey, Tina is cornered by four studded, lust-crazed bikers. She manages to administer a black eye before she's rescued by airborne superheroes called The Fantastic Five. Later, she meets an inept forest ranger who explains, "I used to be a hair stylist. But they fired me, just because I gave the mayor's wife a mohawk." The teens' adventures continue, unexpectedly finishing in Venice, Italy after a long string of unconnected set pieces. To add to the serendipitous story arc, characters arbitrarily burst into song, belting out synthesized Euro-rock without warning. The original German title was *Gib Gas - Ich will Spass!*, which directly translates to "Give Gas - I Want Fun!" (ZC)

HANNA D: THE GIRL FROM VONDEL PARK

Dir. Rino di Silvestro (as Axel Berger) / 1984

A young woman gets many bad things put into her.

After the success of 1981's *Christiane F.*, other youth junkie prostitute dramas were churned out of the European exploitation factory, with this scumcaked Italian knockoff the most brazen lift. Hanna is a severely wayward teenager, selling herself at bargain rates before going home to trade face slaps with her naked alcoholic mother. Though Hanna's friends regularly die from graphic overdoses, she samples heroin and immediately succumbs to its charms. She's soon locked in a detox center where a cellmate extracts a hidden syringe from her anus and injects its contents beneath Hanna's tongue. Later, after taking a boat ride with several spiked, top-grade punks, our little miss shoots up under her eyelid and pukes. Murder your children before it's too late. (ZC)

HANNAH AND HER SISTERS

Dir. Woody Allen / 1986

An R-rated comedy that isn't full of boner jokes.

I feel sorry for the over-40 crowd. Hollywood just isn't making films for them. All "adult comedies" these days assume that the audience is horny and would laugh at the drop of a fart. Laff-fests just don't reference Henrik Ibsen plays anymore, but this ensemble comedy does. It also features brilliant multi-narration and a punk-fearing Woody Allen. His reaction to the crowd at a concert is probably typical of what a 51-year-old New York intellectual in the mid-'80s would think of people with mohawks: "After they sing, they're gonna take hostages." Allen seems sincerely frightened and thinks they "look like they're gonna stab their mother." The Canadian band 39 Steps play while he nebbishes on. (BC)

HAPPY HOUR

aka SOUR GRAPES

Dir. John De Bello / 1987

The zany side of brewery espionage
is laid bare by the writer/director
of Attack of the Killer Tomatoes.

Funnyman Rich Little and funnyface Jamie Farr (both *Hollywood Squares* alumni) add comedic heft to this stiff party comedy about Marshall Beer, a heady brew with a secret additive that causes uncontrollable addiction. When a competing suds magnate steals the formula, a goof-assed shit tornado is unleashed, spawning car chases, street brawls and a screwy game of golf! The public-at-large becomes so hooked that people ingest nothing but Marshall, and one restaurant is packed with schmoes and shock-haired punks who mock a man for ordering coffee. These spiky partiers leer and chug as the waitress berates the java wimp.

Though it's not as funny as, oh, say, Police Academy 6, this film does offer a scene of supreme '80s nerd Eddie Deezen getting slammed in the schnutz with a two-by-four. Plus the opening theme song is an exclusive track by Devo. And despite this two-fisted onslaught of squareness, *Happy* Hour is "The Official Party Videocassette"...or so says the label on the top right corner of the VHS box. (ZC)

HAPPY NEW YORK

Dir. Janusz Zaorski / 1997

Six Polish immigrants share an apartment
and are all disappointed by the realities of American life.

Mostly taking place within the confines of one New York apartment, this film attempts to show the difficulty of the immigrant experience for contemporary Poles who feel like outsiders in America as well as in their homeland. Two of the characters are brothers, the older one having brought the younger one stateside to help him in a fledgling criminal enterprise. They get shot at while procuring a fake ID and a Polish coin gets jammed into the older brother's ass.

The brothers' roommates include a devout Catholic with a gambling problem; a woman who works as a topless housecleaner for a crippled undertaker; a struggling businessman; and an alcoholic professor. The film is sustained by an atmosphere of sarcastic black humor throughout much of its running time, but in the end things turn excessively grim with characters pulling their own teeth to save money, falling victim to violent sexual jealousies, getting their fingers cut off by loan sharks and even murdering one another.

The immigrants all make frequent video recordings to send back home. The woman does a strip tease for her old boyfriend and the Catholic performs a vicarious Christmas Mass for his wife and kids. But the rest of the guys like to send back videos of themselves acting like jackasses to show how luxurious life is in the New World. The businessman wears a ridiculous cowboy hat and American flag tie, while the two brothers ham it up wearing Statue of Liberty crowns, drinking booze, driving Jeeps, sitting inside a helicopter and jamming on bongos in a department store. But it isn't until they capture a real New York street punk on video that their American experience is complete. (T S

HARD CORE LOGO

Dir. Bruce McDonald / 1996

An unpalatable, bitterly comic mockumentary
on the twilight years of Canadian punk.

Confrontational (and fictional) band Hard Core Logo is reunited by singer Joe Dick to play a benefit concert for gunned-down rock icon Bucky Haight. Hardcore kids are interviewed about the historic reunion show, and Joey Ramone even throws in his two cents on Hard Core Logo's enduring legacy. Following the gig's success, the band members hesitantly agree to embark on a five-city tour to be documented by a film crew. The members squabble, the van sinks into irreparability and spit flies like bullets at every stop. Bassist John interrupts the tedium with the alternate tedium of poetic narration, though his Zen state quickly dissolves when he misplaces his prescription meds. The film captures the aimless, pathetic state of punk in the late '90s...whether or not that was the intent. (*ZC*)

HARD TO KILL

Dir. Bruce Malmuth / 1990

A comatose cop awakens to seek vengeance.

Released at the height of Steven Seagal Fever and regarded as some of the master's finest work. Here, he plays Mason Storm, whose wife and son are blasted by corrupt cops. Storm is also hit point blank three times with a double-barrel shotgun, but manages to wake up from a seven-year coma sporting a pirate beard. After a subtly homophobic massage experience with the hospital's male physical therapist, a glamourous lady nurse named Andy (Seagal's actual wife-at-the-time, Kelly LeBrock) helps the disabled lawman escape to embark on the long road to vengeance. The rest of the film consists of retribution sequences, interrupted with the occasional rehabilitation montage, and generous amounts of sex jazz. One tender moment features a spiky red-tipped punk in a leather jacket and handcuff belt watching Seagal hug a child. Beyond that, there's most notably an abundance of crotch violence.

Seagal's star would begin its descent in the mid-'90s, but the actor still maintains his share of the limelight. He's become active in baby elephant rights, had a much-publicized and arguably fictional skirmish with the Mafia, attempted to reinvigorate public interest in solar power and gained a lot of weight. The Dalai Lama ordained him a High Holy Man, and his recent direct-to-video features are available in used sections throughout the world alongside CD releases from his band. I humbly recommend his 2005 album کی

HAWK JONES

Dir. Richard Lowry / 1986

A tough-as-nails cop with a short fuse takes on the mob
after they attempt to murder his woman.

Oh, and did I mention that the entire cast is made up of 8-year-olds? Shocking but true, this shot-on-video production from the mysterious Lowry Brothers is the *Bugsy Malone* of '80s action trash. Minitropolis lawman Hawk Jones is a four-foot-tall, bespectacled purveyor of two-fisted justice, cool under fire…as long as you don't mention his momma! His nemesis is minimafia ganglord Antonio Copolla, who sends in

HEAVY METAL

Dir. Gerald Potterton I 1981

Cartoons aren't just for kids anymore.
They're also for horny uncles.

The Eurocentric sci-trash comics anthology maggets the big screen treatment from unlikely producer Ivan Reitman, with voice talent from John Candy, Eugene Levy and the great John Vernon, plus music from decidedly non-punk acts like Journey and Stevie Nicks. In the film's first long-form story, futuristic cabbie Harry Canyon (Christ, I hope that's not a pun) endures a carjacking attempt from a gruff mohawked shitsack. Harry hits a hidden switch that vaporizes the desperate punk with agonizing laserwaves. In French artist Moebius' segment, a garish new wave act perform the Devo hit "Through Being Cool" as a barely dressed space amazon decapitates alien misogynists. The rest of the film is a yawn-harvesting patchwork barrage of alternate realities and elephantitis-afflicted bosoms. (*ZC*)

HEAVY METAL SUMMER

aka STATE PARK

Dirs. Kerry Feltham & Rafal Zielinski I 1988

Canadian camp.

Two spazz-haired duds pilot a cargo van, spraypainted war stripes and an Iron Maiden logo gleaming off its exterior in the forest sunlight. This Saturday morning cartoon, rocker chic duo are Louis and Rocket, the latter displaying some seriously punk fashion leanings. A skunk-striped bleached hairdo is teased into a vertical blaze, his quasi-robotic makeup and clothing practically post-atomic in intensity. En route to LA to live out their rock 'n' roll dreams, they stop off at Camp Weewankah for the night, where several different caricatures have already pitched their tents. These include the horny teenager, the officious ranger, the power-hungry land developer and—of course—the bitter, hunky naturalist who dresses up in a bear suit to commit crimes against big business. Also present are the predictably nubile co-eds, one of whom is played by youthful exploitation star Isabelle Mejias, who declares, "Heavymetallers are disgusting lowlifes!"

Be Kind
to Animals...

Ironically, she falls for Rocket while he's swimming at the lake, but is disgusted when he shows up at the late-night campground dance in his punk/metal regalia. There's no accounting for taste: Rocket looks outstanding in his freshly-dyed pink porcupine haircut, safety-pinned skull vest and skeleton facepaint. When she dismisses him as "a scumbag heavy metaller," he replies, "Stop putting that label on me...I'm a *musician*! I just don't play *Wimp Music*!" In an effort to bridge their cultural gap, she later arrives at Rocket's van in full glam-metal attire, interrupting his session with a studded metal blowdryer. In no time, she's shredding with Rocket, Louis, an 80-year-old man and Ted Nugent himself. The song is called "Love is Like a Chainsaw" and the scene is so powerful that it got my VCR pregnant. (*ZC*)

HELL W10

Dir. Joe Strummer I 1983

The Clash produce a silent Super 8 gangster pic.

This movie of punks playing dress-up is actually surprisingly well made. Strummer put this together with his bandmates and friends between Clash tour gigs. It's a silent homage to old Hollywood gangster films that's elevated by beautiful camerawork (especially during the driving sequences) and fun performances. Clash bassist Paul Simonon plays down-on-his-luck Earl. His punk girlfriend breaks a guitar over his head and leaves him for good. He decides to make some quick cash by stealing porn films from the notorious gangster Mr. Socrates, played with wonderful charisma by the band's guitarist Mick Jones. The adult films have titles like *Sloppy Seconds*, *Nun on Heat*, *Genital Spanking* and the mysterious *I Play Donkey Kong*. There's a foot chase that leads into a dance scene with a "rankin' shanking DJ," where we see various real punks and hipsters cutting a rug. With decent gunplay, gore, and Strummer himself as a stuffy racist cop. (*BC*)

HELLBENT

Dir. Richard Casey I 1988

The devil likes rock music.

This movie fearlessly depicts the divot in the American counterculture that evidently was 1988. Earnest young songwriter Lemmy (no relation) kills time in a red-lit, low-class dive pulsating with gothic wastes and their black Q-tip haircuts. Stoned maniacs wear sunglasses after dark and howl at the stage as Lemmy's band The Mynde Parasytes grind out lethargic alternative wailings. Hungry for fame, the group sign off their immortal souls to sinister rock promoter Tanas, which one can only assume is an anagram for "Santa" or something. Their shows take a morally-downward turn as Lemmy hacks up live snakes for an enraptured crowd of bikers and zoned-out punks. He becomes hooked on Robitussin, dragging his girlfriend with him into the morass. It all ends with a supernaturally-driven gunfight and a blind man singing in a graveyard. (*ZC*)

HELLO MARY LOU: PROM NIGHT II

Dir. Bruce Pittman I 1987

The spirit of a mutilated prom queen returns
with a mighty bloodthirst.

At her 1957 prom, Mary Lou Maloney is accidentally burned to death by an errant stinkbomb prank. Thirty years later, blah blah blah revenge. Somehow, Mary Lou's rancorous tortured soul is caught inside a latched wooden chest in the drama class storage closet. Once set loose, she immediately murders a frizzy-haired pregnant teen. The spectre then possesses school priss Vicki and continues to wreak havoc, especially for principal Nordham (Michael Ironside in an unusually hapless role), who happens to be the same guy responsible for her firey demise three decades earlier. Lust flares, a rocking horse bares glistening teeth, a telekinetic blast sets the science teacher's crotch on fire and a denim punk gives his most skeptical once-over to the hammy nerd who makes a radio out of a potato. The neon-laden prom finale features another punk walk-on, as well as one of the more memorable (and mean-spirited) '80s high school horror finales. *(ZC)*

HELL'S BELLS: THE DANGERS OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

Dir. Eric Holmberg / 1989

A Christian-as-fuck exploration into the decadent, "occultic" nature of hard rock.

The producer/director/host of this Jesus-flavored educational clip show is Eric Holmberg, an everybody's-buddy stepdad type with nearly long hair and an apologetic smile that only parts to condemn punk and metal in condescending tones. Oddly enough, the first group they showcase as an example of Satan's reach is Fleetwood Mac, with footage of Mick Fleetwood rolling his eyes back like a voodoo priest. Dead Kennedys and lesser-known Texas punk group The Huns are shown alongside metal maniacs like Iron Maiden and even pop monsters Prince, Terence Trent D'Arby and Robert Palmer. No subculture is spared Holmberg's scrutiny: The Cramps and Siouxsie & the Banshees are shown performing, with the vocal acrobatics of blood-smearing maniac Diamanda Galas played as devilish background muzak. Goth is noted as being "more disturbing than heavy metal." MDC (sometimes known as "Millions of Damn Christians") and Lydia Lunch's early group Teenage Jesus & the Jerks also draw fire, proving that these Bible-thumping researchers did their homework. In fact, the obscurity and variety of many of the film's subjects is downright impressive for a gaggle of believers: other represented punk and independent bands include The Birthday Party, The Dickies, Christian Death, Bad Religion, Wasted Youth, Void, Suicide, Black Flag, The Residents, Bl'ast!, The Frogs, Toyah Wilcox, Wall of Voodoo, Current 93 and Devo.

Holmberg quotes a backwards-masked line by crossover artists the Plasmatics: "The brainwashed don't know that they're brainwashed." He also states/lies that a raw egg will become hardboiled if dangled before a speaker at a hard rock show. Madonna is quoted as saying, "Wearing crosses is sexy because there's a naked man on them." Then the host takes his inevitable shot at punk culture: "The punk revolution made self-mutilation a pop phenomenon..." Images of faces pierced with safety pins fade in and out onscreen. "Superficial bloodletting at concerts became a badge of the vacuousness, anarchy and existential madness that was the clarion call of the movement."

In his easy vernacular, Holmberg refers to Satan as "the horn-headed dude in the red pajamas." As the documentary continues, the Lord of Hell is given more and more credit for rock 'n' roll, until it's flatly stated that His bone-crushing, soul-incinerating agenda is behind every song on the FM radio dial. We learn that the Devil is capable of playing a rock artist the same way a musician plays an instrument, a presented example being none other than Huey Lewis and the News. Though Holmberg's narration is inoffensively affable, the only accurate thing he believes is that the Grateful Dead are an unholy abomination.

This avalanche of Jesus-scented errors was followed by the six-goddamn-hour long 2002 sequel *Hell's Bells 2: The Toll Continues*. *(ZC)*

HER NAME IS LISA

Dir. Rachid Kerdouche / 1986

A country boy gets in over his head.

Prolific New York actor Bill Rice plays rural yokel Hargus, a love-struck middle-aged mama's boy who travels to Manhattan to reunite with former flame Lisa. The greatest hurdle in his quest is the fact that she doesn't want to be found, largely due to her shooting him years earlier. The forgiving Hargus is determined to find her, allying with several city folk like Julius (Rockets Redglare) and eyepatched Angel. The latter runs in social circles beyond Hargus' comprehension, surrounding herself with artists, goths and punks. Their appearances cause Hargus to dismiss all metropolitans as "play actors." He eventually gets close enough to his quarry to learn a valuable lesson.

This was director Kerdouche's second and final feature, a stylistic shift from his *Final Reward* from eight years earlier. Rice is convincingly tragic in the heartworn hillbilly lead, further establishing himself as one of the true onscreen talents to rise from the N.Y. underground. *(ZC)*

HEROIC FIGHT

Dir. Chung Wu Ching / 1989

An aging gangster wants to fake his own death so he can spend more time with his granddaughter.

The Yuen Clan is without a doubt the coolest martial arts movie family in Hong Kong. They have provided spectacular physical action choreography to countless films and possess a goofy sense of humor/love of slapstick that is probably best represented by their so-called Rat Face Trilogy. *Heroic Fight* is not a "pure" Yuen Clan film, as Cheung-Yan is the only brother involved, but you can tell that the director studied the Brothers' style as he packs the film with all sorts of frenetic mayhem and mischief. An old gangster named Duh wants to reform and enjoy the company of his spunky young granddaughter named Ting-ting. Cheung-Yan plays a bucktoothed special effects expert working in the Hong Kong film industry with the rest of his family (including cute kung fu powerhouse Lin Hsiao-Lan, who plays an androgynous male stuntman who specializes in female roles). Grandpa Duh hires Cheung-Yan and Hsiao-Lan to help him fake his own death but (of course) things don't work out that simply.

This plot is merely an excuse to unleash all sorts of outrageous events and situations including: lots of HK film parodies; an exploding Penthouse magazine; booby-trapped ice cream cones; a specialized bicycle equipped with sneaky gadgets; giant papier-mâché monster costumes; a Garfield telephone; music cues swiped from Phantasm, Escape From New York and Star Trek 2; killer snakes; crazy car stunts; unlicensed American pop songs; rocket-powered roller skates and a whole lot more. The best Yuen clan films are fantasy-based period pieces, and I guess I prefer fights between wizards, kung fu grandmothers, demons and rat-faced drunks over gangsters and cross-dressing stuntwomen. Still, Heroic Fight is fairly enjoyable for some strange and sloppy fun. The bizarre nature of the film is probably best represented by the scene that makes it "punk-worthy," in which Ting-ting takes her friends for one of the most blatant cinematic McDonald's plugs this side of Mac and Me. Making the scene even more disturbing is that Ting-ting is dressed up as a freaky JonBenét Ramsey/Madonna wannabe, and she struts and dances to the song "Material Girl." While she's enjoying her fried meal, a funny punk boy hits on her. He wears a Hawaiian shirt with a black leather jacket and his hair is styled into a temporary blue/gray mohawk. He says that his name is "Handsome" and does an exaggerated double take when Ting-ting says that her name is Madonna. Shortly, a thug in a Mickey Mouse costume shows up and all the kids go crazy. The guy in the mouse suit ties some balloons to Ting-ting's hands and she floats away, leading to an extensive car/balloon/bicycle chase. Handsome is never seen again. (SH)

HIDING OUT

Dir. Bob Giraldi / 1987

A businessman on the lam disguises himself as a teenager.

The '80s spawned an outright slew of films in what may be the most bizarre studio genre ever established: Disguise-Yourself-and-Go-to-School. Titles like Soul Man, Just One of the Guys and even Barbra Streisand's Yentl were viable box office entries. The f Under Cover even featured a South Carolina high school being infiltrated by a police detective played by a balding 33-year-old man. So despite starting the film off with an impressive batch of facial hair, a 22-year-old punked-up Jon Cryer has every right to head back to the halls of lower learning.

Heavy trading Boston powerbroker Andrew Morenski (Cryer) is targeted by the Mafia. After evading a hail of gunfire, he relocates to the rural home of his aunt Lucy (played by Cryer's real-life mother Gretchen), de-beards and attempts to disappear among the student body of Topsail High School. And what better way to remain inconspicuous than by suiting up in outdated new wave gear and adopting a self-cut bleach-walled hairstyle?

Andrew (now operating as "Maxwell") is far from the only punk on campus; the first shot of the school grounds showcases some righteous lemonade-yellow liberty spikes jutting from a crew of piebald underachievers. In fact, several of the local youths are a bizarre hybrid of camouflaged duck hunters and devil-locked street warriors.

Andrew's young cousin Patrick (Keith Coogan) becomes his confidant/guide through the punishing agonies of a second adolescence, but soon Andrew's irrepressible personality dazzles his fellow students so much that they force him to run against the school paragon for class president. They even do a beatbox rap about him in the men's room. The Mafia hitmen eventually catch on and the inevitable shitstorm is unleashed at the election assembly.

This is a 1987 I wish had existed; where music by The Flying Lizards blares from stereos while teens make out in their parents' cars, and the school janitor lives, drinks and offers sage advice in the gym basement. (ZC)

HIGH SCHOOL USA

Dir. Rodney Amateau / 1983

Jay-Jay needs his misfit friends' help after challenging a jock
to a dirt-track race, the prizes being dignity and
the affection of school sweetheart Beth.

Before he added the "J," Michael Fox was a short, cocky unknown who managed to land the lead role in the most fallen-star-laden TV movie of the '80s. The film's release was delayed, and by the time it aired Fox was already tearing up American TV screens as the upright Alex P. Keaton on Family *Ties*. But he wasn't the only sitcom fat cat drafted to draw viewers; High School USA was out-and-out loaded with small screen alumni from Diff'rent Strokes to Ozzie and Harriet. In fact, the cast of this movie is impossible; a lower-rent It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World. Christ, you even get appearances from multi-movie megapunks like Tom Villard (Su r z, *Parasite*) and personal favorite Jon Gries (King Vidiot from Joysticks!) Whew...is my nerd showing?

Fox plays Jay-Jay, a slick but unpopular shrimp with a dangerous attraction to Beth, the girlfriend of Beau Middleton, Excelsior

Union High School's resident millionaire prom king. The creatively cast "perfect couple" are Nancy McKeon (terminally tough Jo from *Facts of Life*) and Anthony Edwards, who turns in a pretty impressive Spader-esque asshole performance, considering his next role was one of the titular leads in *Revenge of the Nerds*. When Beau finds out that Jay-Jay is moving in on "his merchandise," a rivalry begins that culminates in the ultimate teen challenge: an auto race on a dirt road (???).

Unfortunately, Jay-Jay doesn't own a car. He turns to his genius inventor friend Otto (future real-life criminal mastermind Todd Bridges), who's just used all of his materials to build a talking robot. The final hope is Archie Feld (Crispin Glover in overalls!), a true geek whose father (Bob "Gilligan" Denver) has just purchased a sleek new sports car. At the roller rink, Archie and his goofy Guido pal Chuckie Dipple are ambushed by two cheerleaders brilliantly disguised as hardline new wavers. The girls bat their blue eyelashes until Archie and Chuckie are convinced they'll get lucky, but the wolves-in-ripped-clothing say they can only get "truly wild" if the boys can provide a car.

Needless to say, plans get ruined and virginities are maintained. Despite the TV-ized homogenization of post-adolescent lust that would normally fuel a wreck like this, *High School USA* is an honestly entertaining chunk of empty-headed teen comedy. Overall, director Rodney Amateau really knew how to dish out satisfying fluff. He'd started off in flop features, then self-demoted to the small screen with series like *My Mother, The Car* and *Mister Ed*. He later helmed one of the craziest unseen movies of the '70s: *Son of Hitler*, starring *Harold and Maude*'s Bud Cort as Adolph's kid "Willi." (*ZC*)

HIGHWAY TO HELL

Dir. Ate de Jong I 1991

A young man literally goes through Hell
to retrieve his true love.

Charlie (Chad Lowe) and Rachel (Kristy Swanson) are eloping lovers en route to Las Vegas. One wrong turn and she's taken into custody by the supernatural Hellcop, a grimoire-scarred wraith in a megapowered car that haunts the quiet desert roads. The groom-to-be wastes no time in blasting through to the underworld, and there faces an endless array of threatening oddities. He's greeted by Lita Ford, then attacked by a rabid cannibalistic ice cream man. A doughnut shop is filled with eternally damned police officers, one of whom has a handcuff through both eyes. A group of Andy Warhols in construction gear herd sinners into a gigantic meat grinder. Two punks sitting in an upside down car on hell's freeway are hit by a patrol vehicle...and naturally flip it off. The film rages on with crack-pot scenarios and zany set pieces without much concern for the central plot, which is absolutely the right move as these situations are far more engaging than the film's leads. At "Hoffa's Casino," nuns play the slots and Genghis Khan (Ben Stiller) argues with Adolf Hitler (the eternally brilliant Gilbert Gottfried) at a poker table. Though the film had a fair budget, there are points that feel like a real rush job; when two bikers ride off a cliff to their "deaths," you can clearly see them land on a mattress three feet below. But these moments are charmers, and *Highway to Hell* has plenty of 'em. The closing credits inform you that the motorcycle gang was played by Das Psycho Rangers, and that the boom mic duties were handled by "Pud Cusack." (*ZC*)

HIPPY PORN

Dir. Jon Moritsugu I 1991

A close-knit group of mumbling youths struggle
to remain boring and unlikeable.

Scumslinger Moritsugu's second feature, showcasing motionless art school dropouts smoking while they complain about sex and whatever else crosses their mind. When these shallow conversation wells run dry, they're left with nothing but teased hair and troubled poses. Brain-dead slow-mo spazz Mick huffs some paint and performs an inaccurate soliloquy on the origins of punk culture. Cheaply poetic title cards flash onscreen in a likely attempt to break up the tedium. It doesn't work. Shot on the cheap, it's nonetheless a tragic waste of film, and an even greater waste of time for all seven people who've watched it through to the end. The most fascinating thing about *Hippy Porn* is the fact that the content manages to be even worse than the title would suggest. At one point, the characters address the fact that independent art films consist of wine-soaked alternative youths griping about nothing. This comes off as an effort to knowingly excuse the movie's drudgery, but a turd facing a mirror is still a turd. (*ZC*)

THE HISTORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

Dirs. Ted Haimes & Andrew Solt I 1995

Time/Life flaunts their limited knowledge of punk rock music.

Every installment in this series starts with an opening credits montage of different styles/bands from all corners of rock. Among the images are two punk girls, Johnny Rotten and a photo of the Queen of England with a large safety pin through her nose.

One volume is a brief, obvious recount of punk that's useful for interested 12-years-olds, but will greatly disappoint anyone with an actual love for the subject. We get the same old footage of the Ramones, The Clash and the Sex Pistols. There's a brief mention of the LA scene with X, but hardcore is only referenced as a bunch of nuisances that ruined punk. Then Robert Plant talks about how America didn't have any true punk scene until Nirvana's rise in 1991. Insulting. Instead of talking about D.C. hardcore (nary a mention), we get clips and interviews with Elvis Costello, The Police and U2.

This was followed by a final episode called "Up from the Underground," featuring interviews and clips from Billy Idol, Ice-T, The Go-Go's, Bruce Springsteen, Joey Ramone, Green Day and Devo (the group's mastermind, bassist Gerald Casale, offering his insights). Some of these bands are great, but in just 60 minutes, the program sloppily attempts to cover MTV, rap and alternative music.

It's just not enough time to do anything justice. Most of the people they talk to have clearly lost touch. Perry Farrell complains that rap music samples other songs and he doesn't think that is very original. Brian Eno talks about how impressed he was by a Red Hot Chili Peppers video. Then the world loses its mind when David Bowie praises grunge and Eric Clapton in the same breath. Wildly dated, mostly embarrassing and largely incorrect. *Time/Life*, fuck off. (BC)

HOLLYWOOD ZAP

Dir. David Cohen I 1986

A dweeb, a thief and a punk wander the streets of LA.

Tucker Downs is a misplaced Mississippi nerd searching for his estranged father in Southern California. The West Coast is more than he can handle; within his first 24 hours, he's kicked in the ass, gets his ear tongued by a fat man and a hitchhiker poops in his car. The offending co-pilot is Nash, a former Wall Street stockbroker who enlists the aid of bleached pixie punk Tee Tee (*Suburbia's* De Waldron) in showing the boys around LA. At a video arcade, Nash hustles a pack of Zaxxon-playing street kids that includes a couple of zebra-patterned new wave glamazons. When they try to vacate without handing over his winnings, he unholsters his "punk pounder": basically a motor-powered chattering stapler. Tucker sets out on his own across the city, encountering topless beach bunnies and pantsless drunks. He eventually locates his pop, only to learn that the old man has had a sex change and entered a convent. An unrecommendable exercise in VHS tolerance; feel free to fast-forward to the scene where a karate dwarf busts his own gonads with nunchucks. (ZC)

HOME IS WHERE THE HART IS

Dir. Rex Bromfield I 1987

Lowlifes attempt to swindle a zany coot.

Despite the participation of the great Leslie Nielsen and a seemingly humiliated Martin Mull, this Canadian production is about as appealing as a diaper full of maggots. A corrupt live-in nurse fills a comatose old lady's I.V. with coffee, killing her and transforming her wealthy 103-year-old husband into an available bachelor. The nurse's simpleton boyfriend (Stephen E. Miller, who played the simpleton choreboy in Canuck horror film *Funeral Home*) stashes the old man in the attic of their suburban dump. When the codger's So-year-old identical twin sons come poking around with the local sheriff (Nielsen), the conniving kidnapper couple takes their senile cargo on the lam. Following a flat tire, they hitch a ride with a peacock-haired loadie driving a station wagon spangled with multicolored triangles. This ardent punk wears a massive dangling chain-earring and does his damndest to bum the old man's medication. A wedding ceremony is attempted in the punkmobile, but the disoriented old fossil holds up the proceedings when he says "banana" instead of "I do." You see what we're dealing with here; if this caliber of humor doesn't do it for you, maybe you'll enjoy the hilarious running joke about a heartbroken middle-aged woman taking drugs and failing at suicide. How anyone involved in this mess went on living is beyond me. (ZC)

HOME SWEET HOME

Dir. Mike Leigh I 1982

The lives of three postal workers intertwine in a film that leaves the viewer feeling like they've been kicked in the heart by a sad donkey.

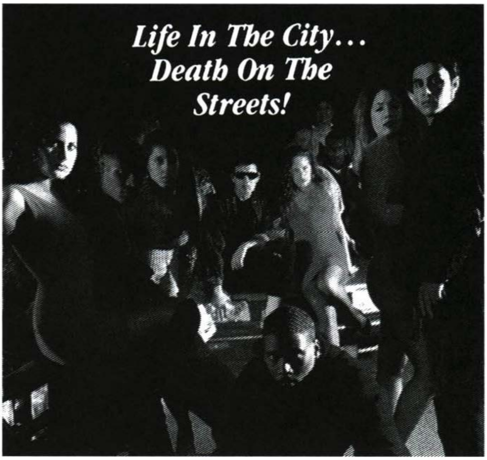
If you ever feel like life is garbage and all the interactions between men and women are meaningless and without worth, Mike Leigh will be there to say you are 100% correct. The acting here is top goddamned notch and full of brilliant, gut-wrenching moments of true emptiness. The most powerfully tragic are the scenes between the well-meaning Harold (Tim Barker) and his dissatisfied, unnecessarily cruel wife (Su Elliot). She constantly breaks him down and sleeps with his co-worker. He deals with it by quoting old pop love songs and telling bad jokes. On his postal route, he pays no attention to a small group of punks hanging out on the sidewalk. These seemingly actual punks represent the outsiders of England, who won't partake in the dead-end jobs and faux-loving relationships built on a false foundation of insecurity that the main characters (and most everyone on the planet) ride to the grave with. This is a very painful film to endure, but worth the attempt if you are strong-hearted and can take it as a warning on how not to end up. Once this DVD ejects from the player, pop in *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* and live life to its fullest. (BC)

HOMEBOYZ II: CRACK CITY

Dir. Daniel Matmor I 1989

Those evil white real estate developers are at it again.

Young suburban African-American David has relocated to Harlem to help his struggling aunt. The firm that owns her decayed building


Life In The City...
Death On The
Streets!

is forcing her out, and David—with his marginally streetpunk cousin Spider-–do all they c to stop it when not running from pushers and bare-knuckled enforcers. The film plays out with multiple, simultaneous plots that cover every metropolitan tragedy: drugs, crime, prostitution, murder, revenge and toplessness. Also, a scene i a decadent sex club features the least-funny British comedian of a ltime, which is every bit as difficult to claim as Drunkest Wino. Spider fights the good fight throughout, and though his circular sunglasses and fringe jacket make him stride the border between casino-rock keyboardist and punk, he still dies with his dog collar on. Amen. (*ZC*)

HOOK

Dir. Steven Spielberg / 1991

Spielberg pooper that ponders what would happen if
Peter Pan actually DID grow up and became a corporate
lawyer, bad father, or, worse yet...Robin Williams.

J.M. Barrie's DanaDOi was about an atrociously w! J boy who rejects the confines of a British upbringing in favor of an eternally youthful life devoted to humiliating assholes and iifrp having fun. In other words, a fairytale laced with the very essence of punk rock. Pan longs to be respected, but has no concern for morality or any other responsibility. His freedom and individuality cannot be spoiled by the sickening shadow of a future, but his inability to a makes Pan a emotionally inept, tragic character.

8iiflr does nothing with this concept, instead functioning as a ham machine for its stars. It only draws on the source material when the movie strolls near the edge of vacancy. The film also blackened the hearts of many young Spielberg admirers. Could it be because of a saccharine treatment of the young cast that verges on exploitation? Or the overtly false set design? Or perhaps it's John Williams' densely manipulative score that makes one feel the withering of one's own childhood. Barrie's DOi is a fable about the dissidence of the modern man faced with his own mortality, as told via kids who get to fly away from their lives, have wild adventures and beat the breakfast out of adults. 8iiflr is about bad lawyer jokes and Julia Roberts laughing at how much she gets paid. The kids who play the Lost Boys get to have fun; they sleep in tree houses, have frosting fights and sing a little song about how old and fat Peter (Robin Williams) has become. Their leader is the punk-inspired Rufio, who sports a red tri-hawk, trashed black jeans and a fringed leather top with shoulder pads. Pan calls him a "skunk headed, mousse-for-brains punk kid." Rufio was later (brace for it) the name of a severely pop punk band that reached mid-level success in the late '90s, though only with 13-year-old girls in Southern California. The movie's lulling mediocrity makes it perfect for bedtime, but you're better off just reading a book. (BLB)

HOT CHILD IN THE CITY

Dir. John Florea / 1987

A woman visits her big-time record-producing sister in the city.

Joining the ranks of one-hit wonders turned into forgettable movies, *Hot Child in the City* transforms Nick Gilder's repetitive megahit into a mid-'80s curio featuring lots of dated fashion and slow-motion montages set to pop songs. Rachel (Leah Ayers Hendrix) drops in on her sister Abby (Shari Shattuck), a high-powered record producer in Los Angeles. The pair spends their time changing outfits and frolicking to cruddy bands of the era, like Go West and Fun Boy Three. Eventually, the sisters head to a nightclub called Ground Zero, where Abby dances in blur-motion to Billy Idol's "Eyes Without a Face" and Rachel gets hit on by a fakey punk in a torn white T-shirt. I don't think the screenwriters could come up with any dialogue for the punk, so he just sort of mumbles until he's told to buzz off. Rachel is turned off by the whole scene and returns to Abby's apartment where she lounges in her underwear and drinks a can of Coors. After receiving a call from her sister, Rachel returns to Ground Zero, only to find her sister dead in a garbage dumpster. Frustrated with the cops' slow progress, she goes undercover as a "hot child in the city" (yet another montage, this time set to Lou Reed's "Take a Walk on the Wild Side") and proceeds to track down her sister's slayer.

8imfffrZir mfanr isn't much of a mystery, as director Florea is more interested in finding excuses to have his lead actresses try on lingerie rather than develop any intrigue or suspense. With only a handful of suspects (an androgynous singer named Charon, Charon's "friend" Tim, a sexist asshole named Tony and the mush-mouthed punk), it's a little too easy to spot the red herrings and deduce the real killer. Made strictly to cash in on a hit song title, 8imr .fffrZs useless as an intricate mystery; rather, its ideal audience likes to watch skinny, vapid blondes prance around in slips to the beat of dumb '80s tunes. (*SH*)

HOT DOGS ON THE RUN

Dir. Damon Foster / 1990

A zany, historically-confused high-kicking comedy.

Another weekend-made shot-on-video martial arts parody by tireless VHS auteur Foster. Opening narration informs us that the world is in shreds and various bikers, bandits and punks roam the countryside. This is illustrated with a pack of glowering hoodlums led by a switchblade-toting female punk with studded shoulder pads and a bouffant hairdo. One of her followers, a chubby goon in Ramones garb, is defeated in battle and the entire villainous crew throws down their weapons to follow the path of peace. Wimps. The rest of the film details the intolerably joyless adventures of armpit-farting martial artist "Wackie Chan." See him fall down. See him eat "gang-raped pork." See your horrified face reflected back at you in the glass of your television screen. (*ZC*)

HOT MOVES

Dir. Jim Sotos / 1984

Four high school boys make a pact to get laid
by the end of the summer.

The film opens with a boombastic montage of actual Venice Beach denizens: breakdancers, people doing aerobics, skateboarders, a dog in sunglasses, roller skaters, a fat woman's butt, BMX bikers, bodybuilders and punks. *Hot Moves* adopts the standard '80s horndog plot, but makes it all the more worthwhile by injecting insane nonsensical hijinks. The chubby slob Barry, who makes his money by pretending to be a blind white blues musician, picks up a waitress at the bowling alley and accidentally sets fire to her room. One of the dudes almost gets it on, but the girl can't because "He" is watching. She points to a picture of Richard Nixon. When the boys go to the darkest porno shop in existence, they have a conversation about "penis butter flavored" jock straps with actor Virgil Frye (father to Soleil "Punky Brewster" Moon-Frye and credited here as "The Porno Man"). Gratuitous ketchup drinking is featured as is miniature golf, transvestites and midgets. Our virgin heroes knock punkers when they drive by a pack standing on the street corner.

"Hey Barry...why don't you dye your hair blue and put a safety pin through your nose? It might improve your looks." It's not nice of his friends to make fun of Barry, but he later orders a pizza and says he hates pepperoni, so more power to them for mocking this pathetic excuse for a token fatty. Sex bomb Monique Gabrielle stars as Babs. (BC)

HOTSHOTS

Dir. Jeric Soriano I 1984

Two young teens meet girls through the apparently rich Filipino new wave breakdance movement.

This Pinoy disasterpiece may feature the least traditional punk included in this entire book. He's Archie, a slick, clean-cut studs-n-leather breakdancing machine with a spraypainted "1984" T-shirt and colored war stripes on his face! Archie's best pal Boy is constantly striking out with the ladies despite endless tips from his smooth comrade. Meanwhile, a famous teen jazz-scatting artist lives the life Boy can only dream of, their paths destined to converge.

The funk-laden soundtrack and a third of the dialogue is in English, and that's more than enough to deeply enjoy this high-grade South Seas trash. Synchronized dance numbers break out in fast food restaurants. Top 40 U.S. radio hits blare illegally every five minutes. Wayward youths in sunglasses spazz at video arcades. Not content to simply steal the theme music from *Footloose*, *Hotshots* also pilfers the parents vs. music bit, and leading schmuck Boy is forced to hide his dollar-store Casio from his tune-despisin' dad.

When Archie gives Boy his much-needed punk makeover, it includes a squirt of hair-styling slime from a tube marked "Punk Jelly." Boy emerges from the ladies' room (the mens' was locked) wearing a safety-pinned shirt, studded collar and two pounds of accessories. This leads to an unbeatable montage of questionably punk 10-year-olds striking poses in front of a movie theater playing *Zombie III*. Two of these spike-haired squirts inexplicably have swastikas painted on their rosy cheeks. Dozens of adolescent wavers crawl out of the woodwork as the new Boy makes his social debut, including a scrawny toughie who dances in a homemade "Oxy 10 Acne Medication" T-shirt. Of course, Boy gets a date in no time, and ends up at an underground dance club that evidently only caters to middle-school-age Pretenders fans. Like every true romantic, Boy has a lightning bolt drawn on his face when he experiences his first kiss. (ZC)

HOUSE

Dir. Steve Miner I 1986

An author is drawn into the mysteries of a supernatural mansion.

A light-hearted fatality-fantasy from the creative team behind the early *Friday the 13th* films. William "The Greatest American Hero" Katt stars as Roger Cobb, a divorced best-selling writer whose grisly novels are the favorites of countless rabid fans. Several dozen of them are in attendance for a signing, a rich cross-section of obsessive shut-ins and shifty-eyed goobers. There's also a lone female punk with shaved sidewalls, looking more traditionally presentable than anyone else in the room, if only by default. Sandwiched patiently between pudgy virgins and dazed survivalists, she eventually makes it to Roger's table. She compliments his latest book, and he counters with, "Nice hair." Later, he moves into his senile aunt's house following her suicide, hoping to complete his Vietnam War memoir. Instead, he battles unholy forces that include reanimated taxidermy, levitating garden tools and a blobbish demonoid in a satin evening gown. George Wendt (Norm on TV's *Cheers*) appears as a fat man. (ZC)

HOUSE OF THE RISING PUNK

Dir. Christoph Dreher / 1998

An unfortunately-titled documentary that takes an inquisitive outsider's stance to investigate the roots of East Coast U.S. punk.

The tale of the Bowery's place in rock history unfolds yet again, chronologically told in grainy, borrowed Super 8 footage, still photos and interviews with Richard Hell, Patti Smith, Dee Dee Ramone, Tom Verlaine and many others. CBGB proprietor Hilly Kristal and NYC filmmaker Amos Poe throw in their reminiscences, the latter explaining how his 1976 scene document *The Blank Generation* first came into being. Clips from the film flicker past, leading into Jim Jarmusch discussing the heavy inspiration that Poe and Euro-Manhattanite Eric Mitchell had on his work. Ramones footage drops in, cribbed from *Rock 'n' Rol High School*.

The documentary was ostensibly made by German TV series *Pop Odyssee* as a reaction/companion to Legs McNeil's indispensable music biography *Please Kill Me* (though the author's name is misspelled every time he appears onscreen). Much due credit is given to the deeply influential *Punk Magazine*, which McNeil poured his life into for years. There's also much complimenting of *Punk* co-founder John Holstrom's photo-comic fumettis from the mag's pages, which featured Richard Hell, Deborah Harry, Joey Ramone and any other member of the scene willing to immortalize themselves in stories like "Mutant Monster Beach Party." (ZC)

HOW I GOT INTO COLLEGE

Dir. Savage Steve Holland / 1989

A pathetic academic hopeful bases his future on the whims of a woman who doesn't know he exists.

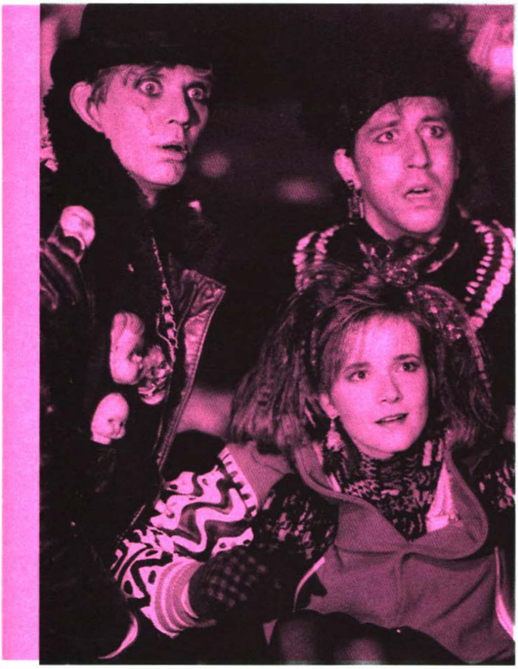
High school senior Marlon (Corey Parker) lives for his unrequited love for Jessica (Lara Flynn Boyle). When she selects a high-profile college, he's stuck with the impossible task of raising his SAT score to follow her to the ivy-covered halls. In a tutoring course taught by the late, great Phil Hartman, Marlon sits behind a catatonic, maroon-haired Ramones-chic girl, complete with leather coat and sneer. This film rang the death knell of the party comedy. The necessary stereotypes are all here: zany slob best friend, snobbish social climber, robotics-crazed nerds and exposed bras, but the magic had faded in the oncoming headlights of the goddamn '90s. (ZC)

HOWARD THE DUCK

Dir. Willard Huyck / 1986

A talking duck from another world battles interdimensional annihilation.

This immensely entertaining teeth-clencher features more punks in its first 15 minutes than a Black Flag show. A new wave duck looks on as a space/time warp levitates Howard from his apartment, past a naked she-duck in a bathtub and directly into the alley behind Cleveland's wildest punk venue. He's manhandled by a dozen spiky lowlifes (including *Repo Man's* Miguel Sandoval) before he lands on the back of a motorcycle driven by a member of hard-assed female biker gang Satan's Sluts. Meanwhile, Beverly (Lea Thompson) and her band Cherry Bomb are inside playing their hit "Hunger City" to an appreciative crowd. Two overly amorous fan freaks corner her in an alley and quickly end up with Howard's webbed foot in their asses, thanks to his "mastery of Quack Fu." He and Beverly become fast friends, and she expresses that she's "sick of her band playing in grungy mungholes." Howard does some heavy waddling to a hot synthesizer beat and becomes Cherry Bomb's manager, seducing Beverly in the process and opening the door for a very memorable condom scene. Her best friend is zany lab assistant Phil Blumburtt, played by Tim Robbins with a wacky, mega-hammy zeal that he wouldn't exceed until his hilarious performance in *Mystic River*. Legally-troubled character actor Jeffrey Jones appears as a scientist who explains Howard's arrival, and ultimately causes monstrous complications when an experiment goes wrong. They all dine at Joe Roma's Cajun Sushi, where it's revealed that the scientist has been possessed by a demonic space overlord. He proves it by blowing up a mustard container with blue eyebeams, then details his plan to transport his evil creature comrades to Earth and usher in the apocalypse. Will Howard save Bev and all mankind? Well...yeah. I mean, come on.



Stories of the film's production and release are almost as outrageous as its plot. Tori Amos, Phoebe Cates, Jay Leno and Belinda Carlisle all auditioned for roles. Steve Gerber, creator of the brilliant original 1970S comic book, hated the script and would take no part in the project. Allegedly, the film financially bruised George Lucas, and was such a colossal flop that the head of Universal Pictures resigned upon seeing the box office totals. It won multiple Razzie Awards, becoming a notorious bomb; so much so that in an episode of *The Golden Girls*, Rose comforts a man who admits to being a primary backer for *Howard the Duck*. It was released overseas a few months later, and most countries changed the name, poster and advertising to completely hide the fact that the film's lead was a wisecracking waterfowl: in Spain it was *Howard:* A New *Hero*; in Italy, *Howard and the Destiny of the World*. Only Japan was bold enough to play it straight, with the all-too-fitting re-title *Who Prosecuted Howard the Duck?* To quote our hero: "Waaauugghh!!!" (*ZC*)

HOWLING II

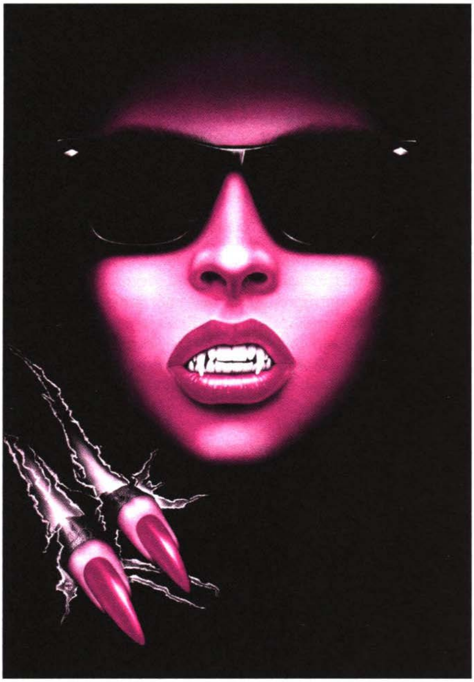
Dir. Philippe Mora I 1985

Two very dull people and a monster hunter must stop a glamorous female werewolf from destroying mankind.

This magnificently crippled sequel (originally titled *Howling 2: Stirba – Werewolf Bitch*) maintains none of the storyline, characters or logic from the preceding film. The plot and dialogue are so jumbled that it feels like segments have been removed at random. Despite the fact that it's an American production, the whole thing seems badly translated and poorly dubbed. Some diehard fans of the *Howling* series aggressively pretend this installment doesn't exist, failing to recognize that it's The Best Werewolf Movie Ever Made.

No other film features 1/10th the relentless onslaught of new wave lycanthropic mayhem found here. The VHS box reads: "Torture, death and destruction reign supreme in the castle of werewolves," printed above a fanged lady with sunglasses and a supernatural manicure. The woman is Stirba, an immortal she-wolf played by equally ageless ass-kicking actress Sybil Danning. Stirba has decided to gather the rest of her wolfpack together in Eastern Europe to assume domination of all these puny humans. Her right-hand woman is a rabid LA scenester with a taste for blood. She hangs out at a nightclub, watching the bleached soft-synth band while awaiting her prey. Ballyhooed werewolf hunter Stefan Crosscoe (Christopher Lee) decides to scope out the place for supernatural fiends. At 63 years old, he knows he'll look out of place without some drastic camouflage, so the dapper Englishman purchases a pair of new wave shades from a punk merchant at the door. No joke: Christopher Lee in Devo glasses! His vision possibly impaired by subculture chic, Crosscoe fails to notice the young maneater's exit, and she soon enough corners a few punk lowlifes in a warehouse. She tears through them one by one before heading back to the homeland to meet her shapeshifting comrades and harvest our species.

Obviously, Stirba's plan sits poorly with our hero. He enlists the aid of a couple clueless Americans and flies across the world to stop it. Once they've checked into their Transylvanian motel, the creature hunters are introduced to the local anti-wolf force, which consists mainly of torch-bearing old men and a very high-strung dwarf whose eyeballs later explode in what I can truly call one of the most rewarding movie moments on record. There are some other brilliant spots



throughout, including highlighter-pen magic beams, an unintentionally eerie papier-mâché head parade and a hair-sprouting transformational bedroom tryst between Stirba, her protégée and the guy who played escaped convict Mickey in *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*!

French expatriate director Philippe Mora clearly enjoyed Danning's savage pre-coitus shirt-ripping shot, since it plays dozens of times over the closing credits, while not-quite-punk band Babel's recurring Eurotrash anthem "Howling" provides a lethargic soundtrack to her bouncing attributes. It seems Mora was also impressed with the LA glampunk scene, as he'd already borrowed some of its questionably street-smart aesthetics for Christopher Lee's gun-toting female minions in the 1983 film *Return of Captain Invincible*. *(ZC)*

HUMAN HIGHWAY

Dirs. Neil Young (as Bernard Shakey) & Dean Stockwell / 1982

Nuclear meltdown zaniness at a roadside diner.

Dad-rock royalty Neil Young spent three years and three million of his own dollars to complete this senseless comedic attack on who-knows-what. One would initially assume he's railing against nuclear power, as the members of Devo appear early on as reckless, luminescent toxic waste-disposal technicians. Perhaps he was driven to shoot an anti-war epic, as the film imagines the final day on Earth before its annihilation. Or maybe—just maybe—Young wanted to make a movie where he sticks out his upper teeth and goes cross-eyed a lot, in which case *Human Highway* hits its mark flawlessly. Dennis Hopper and co-director Dean Stockwell appear as employees of the greasy spoon eatery, preceding their *Blue Velvet* collaboration by several years. Devo later return in a psychedelic dream sequence, singer Mark Mothersbaugh in his masked Booji Boy persona belting out an aggressive version of "Hey, Hey, My, My (Into the Black)" while the song's author Young noodles along with grit teeth, untuned quitar and a freshly-torn Sex Pistols tank top. Reaching an aggressive six-string crescendo, Young begins banging his head against Booji Boy's crib. His no-rules tantrum is unconvincing, but then again, Neil Young would have a hard time passing for a punk if he beat the pope to death with a cop. *(ZC)*

THE HUNGER

Dir. Tony Scott / 1983

If Catherine Deneuve and David Bowie were vampires, there'd be a lot of consensually anemic people in the world.

The opening sequence has to be among the best of any vampire movie. It isn't due to violence or gore, but it leaves just as strong an impression, as it cuts between the opening titles and the band Bauhaus performing their anthem "Bela Lugosi's Dead" inside a nightclub cage. The audience is a large crowd of goths, punks and new wavers, surveyed by stylish Miriam and John (Deneuve and Bowie), seemingly out looking for a couple to take home for sex. The shots alternate between the band, the couple and the dance floor until they find their playmates. The Bauhaus intercuts continue as the couples pair off together back at the house. The youths realize too late that they've been brought home for blood, and the intermittent images shift to a monkey in a control room tearing another's throat out. This all plays through the endless Bauhaus footage, and leads you to the question that John asks Miriam as they clean up in the shower: "Forever?"

This isn't a simple vampire movie; it neither falls easily into the horror or drama category. Not once is the word "vampire" actually used. Through flashback sequences we find out that Miriam dates back to the time of the pharaohs. The "forever" promise she makes to her lovers (the rest of which are stashed neatly undead in the attic) seems to be a bit of a white lie. This is where Dr. Sarah Roberts (Susan Sarandon) comes in. She's a doctor who specializes in aging. It would seem that John has hit his use-by date and is advancing at about 20 years per day, going fast.

This movie was Tony Scott's first feature and was dumped on by the critics. However, that doesn't mean that every goth kid age 14 and up didn't have a tremendous obsession with this movie. It was intelligent, it was odd and it was subcultural...everything we believed we were. The Deneuve/Sarandon lesbian scene didn't hurt either. *(JH)*

HUSBANDS, WIVES, MONEY & MURDER

aka THE CENSUS TAKER

Dir. Bruce R. Cook I 1984

A census taker gets a little too personal with
a family and ends up murdered.

A long, tedious satire on married life in the '80s. Most of the film takes place in a kitchen and living room. The lack of locations gives the feel of a play: a very boring, never-ending play. That's not to say the performances aren't good. The underused Garrett Morris carries the first half of the film as the nosy alternate title character. Timothy Bottoms is funny as the sleazy detective. The only time the film leaves the house is to show the married couple's children. They lie to their parents, saying they're going to the arcade, but instead hang out with punk girls who dye and spike their hair. When they call their parents to check in, they hold a tape recorder to the phone that plays arcade noises. Later, the prepubescent punks rob an ATM. Soundtrack by incognito SF art-wave legends The Residents. *(BC)*

HYPE!

Dir. Doug Pray I 1996

A nostalgic view of the punk-to-post-grunge Seattle rock era.

Shot after the world's early '90s obsession with the U.S. Northwest had simmered, this playfully condemning documentary features a range of interviews, from anticipated bigtimers like Mudhoney and Soundgarden to more locally appreciated acts like Some Velvet Sidewalk and The Mono Men. Early footage of punk legends the U-Men is shown, as well as prehistoric flyers for shows by Mr. Epp and the Calculations, The Fartz and several other founding fathers of the Seattle scene. The explosion is presented semi-chronologically, with interjections from a massive array of musicians, label-founders, recording engineers, flyer designers and others. The whole affair ends on a sour note (aka a Pearl Jam performance), but obese ex-butcher/grunge icon Tad keeps things from getting too pretty and is the true star here, as far as I'm concerned. *(ZC)*

HYSTERICAL

Dir. Chris Beorde I 1983

Hoping to find inspiration, a romance novelist travels
from the city to a haunted coastal Oregon town.

In the early '80s aftermath of *Airplane*, there was a plethora of sloppy horror comedies like *Pandemonium*, *Saturday the 14th*, *Full Moon High*, *Student Bodies* and the Hudson Brothers' *Hysterical*. The Hudson Brothers are mostly forgotten today, but these three siblings were a '70s generation Marx Brothers/Monkees hybrid, who mixed hilarious hijinks with feel-good pop music. Some of the results of their endeavors were *The Hudson Brother's Razzle-Dazzle Show*, *Zero to Sixty*, Kate Hudson and this goofy spoof that stars brother Bill as a popular romance writer. He wants to complete the proverbial "great American novel," so he leaves New York City for an Oregon speck called Hellview. Once there, Bill discovers an eccentric populace and a haunted lighthouse. He calls in two paranormal experts (played by Mark & Brett Hudson) to investigate the ghostly activity, thus unleashing an outbreak of "hysterical" events. Included in said hysteria are heavy-handed spoofs of *Jaws*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Exorcist*, *Dracula*, *Chariots of Fire* and *Taxi Driver* (there's a Travis Bickle-type behind the wheel of Hellview's cab company). The large, underused cast includes Julie Newmar, Clint Walker, Murray Hamilton, Bud Cort, John Larroquette, Keenan Wynn, Charlie Callas, Franklyn Ajaye, Cindy Pickett, Gary Owens and, in the movie's funniest running gag, Robert Donner (*Mork & Mindy's* Exidor) as a guy on a bike who yells, "You're doomed!" While the brothers solve the lighthouse mystery, the Hellview residents gradually become zombies. The action culminates in an elaborately choreographed undead dance at an amusement park. During the finale, Bill is briefly threatened by a punk zombie with red hair. This encounter is undoubtedly the closest the Hudson Brothers ever got to punk rock. *(SH)*

I LIKE TO PLAY GAMES

Dir. Moctezumo Lobato / 1995

A softcore erotic thriller about the escalating sex games played by two obsessive advertising executives.

Michael is dissatisfied with his sex life, so when the notorious nymphoid Suzanne (played by *Playboy* playmate Lisa Boyle) gets transferred to his office, he immediately pursues her. She seems interested in him, but strings him along for a sexless eternity. This results in an increasingly absurd series of non-consummational softcore scenes, overflowing with sensual kissing and boob-rubbing, all set to raging smooth jazz.

Despite the fact that half of this film is made up of really unexciting "sex" scenes (like the one in which they smoke weed in an alley and touch each other's torsos while burly guys wander around in the background), it's still entertaining. The couple begins to play their games all the time, totally immersed in their weird insular world of erotic teasing. They meet at club where a paradoxical punk with a goatee serves Suzanne a drink as she pretends not to recognize Michael. He plays along and eventually they have sex in the corner while some creepy biker with Kenny G hair watches enthusiastically. Suzanne invites another girl into the bedroom and they all squeeze together into a big semi-sexy sandwich. The final game plays out when she shows up at his house with a big thug dressed as a cop who carries out a mock execution on Michael. He kicks the cop into a tree and grabs Suzanne, dragging her into the swimming pool and almost drowning her. After proving to her that he could easily have killed her he goes back inside. She softly whispers, "I love you."

It's tempting to interpret the film as a political allegory about military escalation and the cyclical nature of violent abuse, though I'm more certain that director Lobato just likes naked ladies. (*TS*)

I STILL BELIEVE IN THESE WORDS

Dir. Golen Young / 1986

Low-impact adventure with 7 Seconds on their 1985 North American tour.

Long-running, lyrically-empowering group 7 Seconds piles into their rickety van for a summer on the U.S./Canadian highways. The band had built up a following in their five years together, and most of the shows are packed with hyperactive fans. Unfortunately, the production quality of the documentary is nonexistent, the camera usually jostling around in the back of the venue with the sound being recorded through a wool sock. The between-show footage is equally puzzling, either mumbled van conversations or long, trembling pans across abandoned warehouses. The group eventually stops at The Dischord House to record with Ian MacKaye, but by this point they're as drained as the struggling viewer. All in all, this is a 120-minute (!) exercise in patience for anyone but the most dedicated 7 Seconds fan. If that doesn't describe you, then your local video store has thousands of titles for you to choose from. (*ZC*)

IDENTITY CRISIS

Dir. Melvin Von Peebles / 1989

The ghost of a gay French fashion designer inhabits the body of a young hip-hop artist.

"When they switch brains, a GIRLIE MAN turns a LADIES MAN into a WILD MAN!" This was the actual tagline for the most monumental trainwreck in screen-comedy history. The headaches kick off with pulsating MTV-aping opening credits, featuring a dance sequence by African-American cinema legend Melvin Van Peebles. This epochal artistic botch-job was written by his talent-deprived son Mario, who also stars here as Chilly D, a hyperactive rapping janitor with delusions of grandeur. When the Parisian clothing designer he works for is poisoned by Israeli investors, a supernatural bag lady casts a spell that transfers the flamingly effeminate fashion magnate's brain into Chilly's body, and hijinks ensue. Terrible, terrible hijinks. Confused and roaming the streets, Chilly ends up in a transvestite saloon, where the one-eyed mohawked lesbian barkeep gives him some serious lip. Otherwise, the endless homosexual-stereotype characters are nothing more than a cavalcade of sissies, burying the viewer beneath a dumptruck full of limp-wrist jokes, along with a few ethnic slams to round out the proceedings. Which isn't to say that both can't be done right for maximum laughs...but here, they ain't. Oddly enough, this is the second homophobic film with a lead character named Chilly D to be listed in this book (see *Body Rock*).

There are memorable bits amidst the brutality. Chilly picks up rap group The Funky Four in a stolen limousine and takes them out for cheeseburgers. A rainbow-hawked female punk wino drinks with some hobos in an alley. Late, great '80s couch potato guru Larry "Bud" Melman appears in a cameo as a psychiatrist. Through the chaos, Melvin Van Peebles' face is superimposed over random scenes to mumble incoherent narration and half-assed jazz scatting. One of the comparatively bright comedic moments takes place when Chilly D steps in shit and wipes his shoe on a post. If you don't believe this is a highlight, try me; rent this mangy, wheezing dog of a movie. Or better yet, call your mother, tell her you love her and jump off the highest building you can find. I guarantee that your funeral will bring you more joy than this reeking failure. (*ZC*)

IDLE HANDS

Dir. Rodman Flender / 1999

A teenage stoner's hand becomes possessed by a murderous force.

This is the complete catalog of everything that sucked about the '90s: pop punk, suburban potheads, White Zombie, Seth Green and self-aware, ironic horror-comedies. All scenes center on the severely unlikeable protagonist engaging in ineffective gross-out antics while his right hand raises a ruckus, but the most disgusting thing onscreen is punk-as-milk Top 40 warriors The Offspring murdering the Ramones song "I Wanna Be Sedated" at a high school dance. Their faux fashion and practiced posturing hardly earn them inclusion in this book, but an obviously deaf mohawked twit grooving to their bloodless tunes sadly makes the cut. The band's frontman is scalped by the film's vicious titular appendage, providing the viewer his only moment of mercy. Even Fred Willard can't salvage a single smirk from this brown-scented exercise in manic boredom. No laughs, no scares, no sense. From the director of the infinitely superior Lerehaun 2. (*ZC*)

I'M NOT FASCINATING

Dir. Donny Plotnick / 1994

An actual struggling rock group dramatizes the comedic tale of their own failure.

Probably the least likely punk feature ever shot, *INF* is a self-loathing vanity project from Bay Area slop-punk band The Icky Boyfriends. An awkward, trudging dramatization of San Francisco's least loved combo starring friends, enemies and ex-girlfriends of the aggressively untalented "fringe musicians." When their blackhearted manager decides to upgrade the group's image, he brings in "The Punk Rock Guy," a squat goateed spud. The major marketing of the band begins, and it's not long before the Boyfriends are destroyed in a whirlwind of greed and corruption. It's hard to say why Plotnick and the group were driven to produce this rags-to-rags tale, but the results are definitely nearly watchable. (*ZC*)

IN 'N' OUT

Dir. Ricardo Franco I 1986

A hapless twit drives away from all the white people.

The film's very first shot features a manufactured, semi-Madonnafied new waver plucking along at a cello audition. Her instructor is disgusted by either her blue/pink hair or lack of musical talent, and she's banished from the auditorium. Next up is Murray (Sam Bottoms), a luckless case who can't even kill himself properly. Instead, he heads south to Tijuana and lands himself in some dull trouble. His Mexican adventure sees him encountering dwarf policemen, elderly prostitutes and zany fake beards. If this sounds like comedy gold to you, I've got a joke about a chicken crossing a road that'll just plain drive you wild. (*ZC*)

INCIDENT AT CHANNEL Q

Dir. Storm Thorgerson (!) I 1986

A rural metal fan shakes up the locals.

Smalltown veejay Rick catches a great deal of heat for hosting his cable access rock video show *Heavy Metal Heaven*. The program's opening credits show a woman in lingerie being fed toward a table saw while a dog-collared greaseball scientist laughs. As angry adults picket the TV station, Rick runs light metal videos by the likes of Rush and Lita Ford, as well as the occasional rocker from Iron Maiden and Motörhead. The program gets local teens unduly riled, and somehow leads to a major food fight at an ice cream parlor involving a leather-clad punk. A couple middle-aged men beat Rick in an alley. One calls him a "fucking gypsy dildo faggot." But not everyone's an enemy...soon enough Channel Q's studios are surrounded by loads of pro-metal bikers, breakdancers, punks, preps, Vietnam vets and red-blooded rockers.

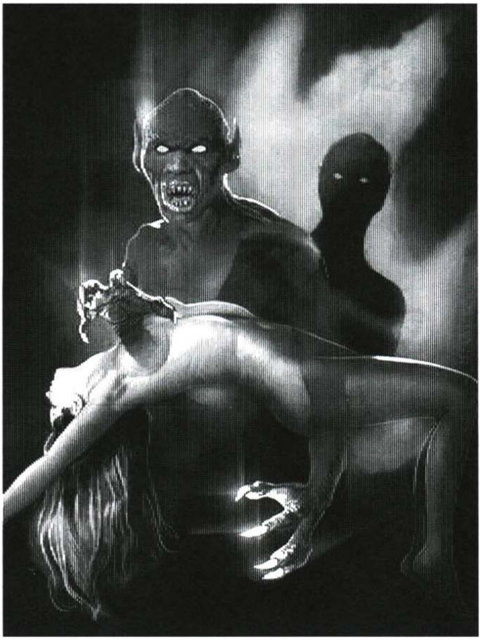
This may sound like an effective Triumph of the Human Spirit tale à la *Pump up the Volume*, but *Incident* is really just a framework to showcase a dozen rock videos. Nevertheless, the film was released in theaters, largely throughout the Midwest. Watch for the anti-abortion metalhead ranting to his friends about "God's gift of life" on some railroad tracks. (*ZC*)

THE INCUBUS

Dir. John Hough I 1981

A sex demon uses its lethal penis to make everyone frown.

Unlike other '80s satano-slashers that only played at being sexist and gratuitously savage, *The Incubus* walks the walk. Filmmaker Hough was already a veteran traumatizer after 1973's *The Legend of Hell House*, but this movie chews a hole into horror's grimy underbelly and suckles its small intestine. Venerable actor/director John Cassavetes shook off some of his hard-earned critical credibility to star in this acutely harsh tale of a vicious creature that kills women using the most vile weapon on earth: SEX. Cassavetes plays a concerned doctor who spends entire scenes hollering about each victim's ruptured uterus and the inhuman blast of red-hued sperm that's destroyed it. Bleccch! As the unsolved epidemic spreads, the town panics. But that doesn't keep local teens from attending a concert by Bruce Dickinson's pre-Iron Maiden project Samson. Assembled for this metal/laser show is a shockingly diverse youth audience, including teenyboppers, backwoods headbangers and a bleached punk in mascara and a hand-written T-shirt. The latter looks shockingly similar to Gun Club frontman Jeffrey Lee Pierce, and even affects his blasé stance when the police investigate a grisly killing at the venue.



Though lumped in with other Canadian tax shelter horror films of the era, *The Incubus* is a remarkably solid project, well directed and toe-curlingly paced. Cassavetes does a respectably outstanding job despite the subject matter and pulls off a perfect father/daughter relationship with actress Erin Flannery, who'd appear a year later in punk classic *Class of 1984*. Even the film's soundtrack is daring, featuring no punk but including the otherworldly track "Lost and Found" by Canadian new wave/prog band FM. (*ZC*)

INNERSPACE

Dir. Joe Dante I 1987

Dennis Quaid is shrunk and roams freely
inside spastic comedian Martin Short's body.

A well-made, exciting film that is—like every Dante joint—a dream for fans of character actors. Henry Gibson, Kevin McCarthy, Robert Picardo, Andrea Martin, Dick Miller, Archie Hahn, Joe Flaherty, Kathleen Freeman and others make up a comedic powerhouse that helps keep the movie from turning into a Martin Short hamfest (which isn't necessarily a bad thing in itself). Loud punk rock can be heard on the headphones of a one-armed henchman

(Vernon Wells of [illegible]) short's character is stood up by a female co-worker who instead goes slamdancing. Not really a cameo, but at the 55:25 mark of the film, New York Dolls bassist Arthur "Killer" Kane can be spotted for literally half a second sitting on the plane as an extra. I wonder what his younger self would have thought of the later scene at the plush Club Inferno, where a man with liberty spikes boogies down to Robert Palmer-esque tunes. [illegible]

INTREPIDOS PUNKS

Dir. Francisco Guerrera / 1983

An army of feral scumrags party hard and kill without mercy.

INTREPIDOS
PUNKS

The most beautifully misrepresented punks ever seen run rampant over this Mexploitation supernova. A actress credited as "La Princesa Lea" plays bleach-blond amazon Beast, the bikini-clad ringleader of a enormous gang of crime-crazed desert misfits. Each of these 30-year-old candy-colored outcasts is a nightmare of new wave fashion; spiderweb eyeshadow, leather hot pants, swastika tattoos, custom sci-fi motorcycles and an endless sea of technicolor mohawks stretches across the dunes. Embittered by a torturous prison stint and her hulking boyfriend Tarzan's incarceration, Beast has her mutant-Bozo henchmen kidnap several government wives. Back at the gang's hideout, the women are aggressively molested as a punk band (actual rockers Three Souls in My Mind) performs just a few feet away. Beast's ransom ploy works, Tarzan is freed and their goons celebrate with gladiator games that later devolve into a massive anything-goes orgy. The punks prove their dysfunctionality is sexual as well as social, with partner-swapping, exhibitionistic masturbation and other acts indicating their unredeemable deviance. The perversions continue into daylight, when innocents are raped, burned and even crushed beneath a tank...and that's just for starters.

[illegible] a reckless, rabid and empowering mess. The only non-reprehensible characters get genitally violated and/or shot in the face within seconds. Every inch of Mexico seems compromised by the gang's frenzied tyranny; even drug lords and police cower in mohawked shadows. The "punk" actors seem overjoyed to hoot and spazz in their hardcore circus gear, the only exceptions being their grim leaders Beast and Tarzan, the latter played by actual masked lucha libre star El Fantasma. It's 99.9% certain that this is the most gleefully assaultive display of a misappropriated cultural movement in history, which is by no means a criticism. On the contrary, the movie's costumer should be hired to design mankind's future.

Released in a extremely limited English-subtitled run as [illegible] *less ers* this film isn't recommended...it's MANDATORY. Followed by 1987's [illegible]

INVASION EARTH: THE ALIENS ARE HERE

Dir. Robert Skotak / 1988

Aliens use compiled footage of vintage science-fiction films to distract a movie theater audience while the invaders replace humans with pod-born duplicates.

[illegible] a little like [illegible] maybe [illegible] footage from various classic films is interspersed with new "comical" segments to create a movie. Robert Skotak is best known for his special effects work and not his skills as a movie director. But a film like this, an homage to '50s sci-fi, is more [illegible] directed. Taking most of its plot from the original [illegible] features (you guessed it) a invasion by insectipoid aliens commanded by a creature who reminded me of Pogo from the funny pages, but

without a body. Anyway, just like in Don Siegel's masterpiece, the aliens plan on replacing humans with pod-based copies. The space bugs kick off their evil plan at a movie theater in San Pedro, California (home of the Minutemen, but that's not why this movie is in this book). Taking over the projection booth, the aliens use a wide array of monster movie footage to distract the audience. Some of the films featured: *The Blob, Rodan, The Giant Claw, Fiend Without A Face* and *Reptilicus*.

The theater audience is composed of various stereotypes: drunks, goofy pre-teens, slobs...and two punk dudes! These guys are classically stereotypical in appearance and never say anything besides "Hey." For some reason, most screenwriters seem to have no idea what a punk might say. But the two guys nonetheless manage to pick up a couple of chicks with their monosyllabic dialogue. At one point, the colorful fellas whip out a boombox and crank a faux-hardcore song called "I Wanna Die." Everyone gets very annoyed by the tune and the dudes eventually get zapped by Moguera (the robot from *The Mysterians*), who shoots at them from the movie screen! *Invasion Earth* isn't really the kind of movie that you watch carefully from end to end; it's probably best used as a party tape. You know... something you'd play in the background to distract people while you replace them with pods. (*SH*)

INVASION OF THE MINDBENDERS

Dir. Eugenie Joseph / 1987

An unsavory high school principal attempts
to control his students.

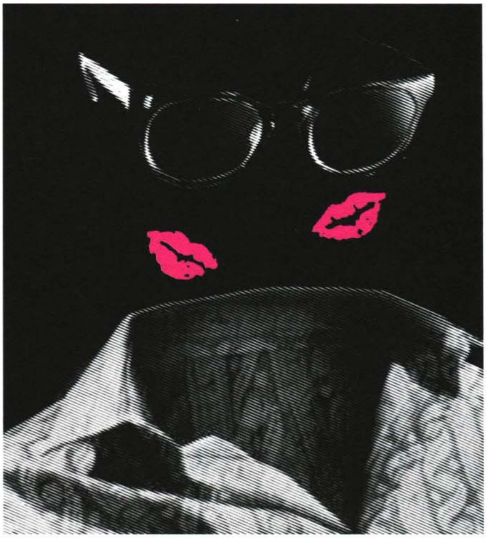
The director of *Spookies* (and nothing else) provides this laughless teen comedy that looks like it was filmed in the suburbs of Siberia. Principal Borden would rather perform mock army maneuvers behind locked office doors than face uncontrollable teens. Crimped teenie-bomb Julie hides in the nerd's locker so she can pull him in by his pants. The school punks start an epic cafeteria food fight, triggering the following song: "I wanna food fight... FOOD FIGHT!" They're listed as "Foodfight Punks # 1 & 2" in the closing credits. Having robbed the geek of his virginity, Julie dances in front of an enormous Max Headroom poster. At the end of his rope, Borden calls in Dr. Gunbow from the Behavior Modification Institute to demonstrate a new mind control computer. The school's worst kids are placed in a classroom to be exposed to the machine. One wears a glittery silver top hat. It's difficult to tell who the film's leads are, but it may be the two ceaselessly irritating pasty spazzes that beatbox in the bathroom. The last half of this movie is as entertaining as a napkin. (*ZC*)

THE INVISIBLE KID

Dir. Avery Crounse / 1988

Rotten, irritating teenagers become transparent
rotten, irritating teenagers.

Bumbling junior scientist Grover (Jay Underwood, star of *The Day My Kid Went Punk*) inherits an imperfect invisibility formula from his late father. He and geekball pal Milton run wild, naked and unseen through the high school hallways, getting vengeance on jock bullies and...drumroll...ending up in the girls' locker room. Grover's mother (Karen Black) is a harried nutcase, and deals with her son's changes by phoning a public access self-help TV host (played by incredible fishmouthed character actor Brother Theodore). Milton becomes addicted to the voyeurism opportunities presented by the invisibility and inexplicably adopts a purple faux-hawk coif as he gives in to his basest desires. Filled with much drug humor, exposed butts, bear suits and a truly agonizing fart sequence. (*ZC*)



INVITATION AU VOYAGE

Dir. Peter del Monte / 1982

A young man deals with the unexpected loss of an
inappropriate partner in an unusual way.

Lucien is left heartbroken when his twin sister/sex partner, hard rock singer Nina Scott, dies in an accident. Traveling France's highways in a daze, he picks up a hitchhiking housewife and the two of them stop off at a small-town club filled with leather partiers pogoing to Nina's recordings. Lucien drives across the country with her corpse strapped to the car's roof in a cello case, wheatpasting her promotional posters on every available surface in an attempt to solidify

her legacy. Along the way, he picks up an old man who says that new wave diva Nina Hagen "drives him wild." The most tender, effective road movie you'll see about grieving, incestuous rockers. (ZC)

ISHTAR

Dir. Elaine May / 1987

Two failed singer/songwriters (Dustin Hoffman and Warren Beatty) are on their way to play Morocco when they get stuck in Ishtar and caught up in political intrigue.

A great comedy with a bad rep as a huge box office failure, but in actuality it was the number one film the week it came out. Oh yeah... it also lost 42 million dollars. May edited it for months until the studios forced her to turn in a final cut. The outcome gets better with age. In the beginning, we see Beatty and Hoffman go through the process of writing songs like "I'm Quitting High School" and "Hot Fudge Love." The songs for the film were all written by May and Paul Williams. It's great to see Beatty let loose like never before, really buffooning it up. Notice how his character's Southern accent comes and goes. The two singers wear matching checkered headbands on stage, and Hoffman sports a skinny red tie. A punk can be spotted in a club where they perform. The film gets weighed down with plot once the two enter Africa, but there's a lot of really dry humor that might not be caught upon the first viewing. Matt Frewer plays a CIA agent who wears sunglasses and a fez. Charles Grodin is a hilariously defeated secret agent and steals every scene with his best performance since Real Life. This film features PG-13 nudity plus some rugged fake Arabic courtesy of the two leading actors. (*BC*)

ISLAND OF THE ALIVE

aka IT'S ALIVE III

Dir. Larry Cohen / 1987

Hideous cannibal babies grow up fast.

The final entry in Cohen's deeply uncomfortable infant monster trilogy. After a tepid second film, Island steers off the rails with bold variations on the quasihuman creatures and their bitter struggle. Here, the subhumanoid births have become an epidemic, and troubled creature dad Stephen Jarvis (longtime Cohen collaborator Michael Moriarty) fights for the survival of his hideous, fanged son. The court rules that all the remaining childbeasts be relocated to a deserted island where they can do no harm to humankind. Five years later, Jarvis and company revisit the location and accidentally free the creatures, which are now fully grown but still hairless, naked and feral. The beasts commandeer a yacht, cannibalize the crew and set sail for a Florida seaside carnival (shot in Santa Monica), where a misplaced but popular punk club bursts with a cornucopia of face-painted dye-job maniacs. "Reagan Youth" is spraypainted above a doorway and an obviously drummerless band lip synchs to a manufactured Britpunk anthem while every possible variation of nonexistent pogoloid bounces off the walls. Some wear vampire gear or Victorian chic, while one male trendsetter is daring enough to make the scene in grandma's pearls. As this fashion insanity spills out onto the boardwalk, a semi-mohawked spazz in a Plastic Man tank top initiates a rumble that erupts into a full-scale beachwide brawl. It's wavers vs. preppies vs. cops, and the monsters show up for cappers, tossing mauled punks through the salty air like used Kleenex.

Though Island of the Alive doesn't exhibit the same intensity as some of Cohen's earlier work, it contains striking performances, specifically from its female leads: Laurene Landon of the Cohen-penned Maniac Cop films has an emotional meltdown, and Academy-Award nominee (though not for this movie) Karen Black loses her composure gloriously while being called a "son of a bitch" five times by a horny Italian. The punk club's cocktail waitress was played by female bodybuilder Gladys Portugues, who wouldn't go on to more roles in Hollywood, but would end up marrying Jean-Claude Van Damme. Twice. (ZC)

ISLANDS

Dir. Rene Bonniere / 1986

An afterschool TV special from Canada about a young punk named Lacy who gets sent to a log cabin on an Ontario island.

Lacy has new wave eye makeup and a super-frizz hairstyle. She shapes her hair in several different styles, including a mohawk. Her adopted parents hope that rustic living will break her rebellious attitude and keep her from vandalizing pizza parlors with her friends. Lacy eventually gets to know herself better and grows out of her troublemaking ways, but, despite maturing, maintains her punk look. (*SH*)

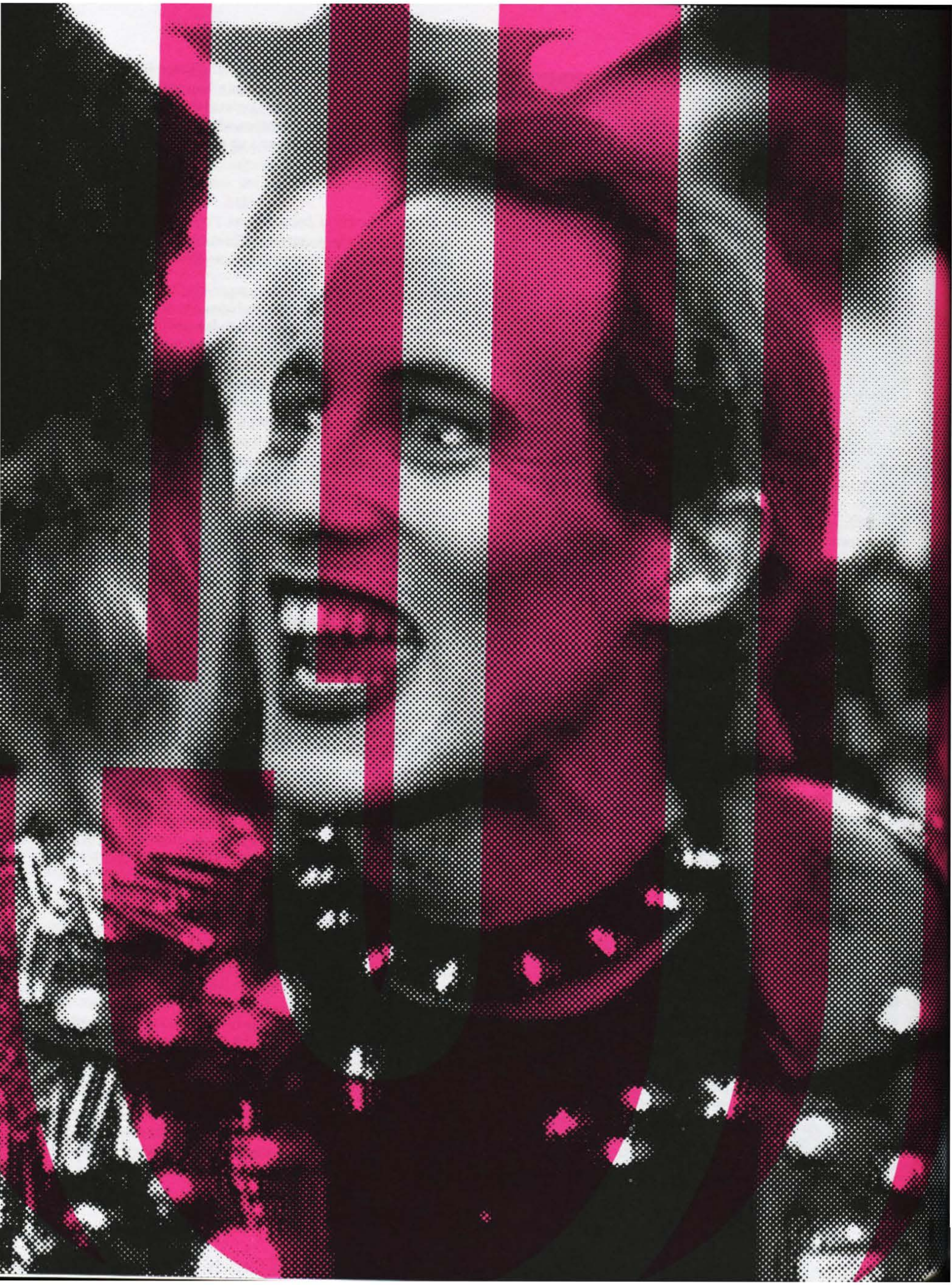
IT'S A COMPLEX WORLD

Dir. Jim Wolpaw / 1992

A presidential candidate employs various schemes in an attempt to destroy his son's rock 'n' roll club.

Essentially a time capsule of the late '80s Providence, RI scene, the action in Complex World centers on a bar called The Heartbreak Hotel. Apparently, there really was such a place and the film's director was one of its bartenders. In the movie, the club is owned by a carefree guy named Jeff (Dan Welch) whose dad is a cynical presidential candidate. Senator Robert Burgess (Bob Owczarek) regards his son's business as a threat to his political reputation, so he cooks up a few different plans to shut the club down for good.

The film's other major thread is Morris Brock (Stanley Matis), a sad sack whose twin brother was the youngest person to ever commit suicide. Since then, Morris has been trying to escape from his brother's shadow. Desperate for notoriety, Morris joins an oddball terrorist group who plan on blowing up The Heartbreak Hotel with a bomb hidden in a beer keg. Little does the gang know that their plan is just one of Senator Burgess' many schemes, another of which involves a rabble-rousing biker gang led by the great Captain Lou Albano. Much of the film consists of musical performances at the bar, where the stage features a white picket fence in front of the drum kit. Morris happens to be a folk musician and he plays several twisted songs with titles like "Khruschev Went to the Zoo" and "Why Do We Feed the Broads?" His tunes don't go over well and the audience pelts him with garbage. The Young Adults were a real Providence band and they get the most stage and screen time. Their singer is named Sport Fisher and he looks and acts a little bit like Adam Ant. Fisher wears a sleeveless black T-shirt festooned with plastic udders and a weird fake fur around his neck. The keyboardist has a Captain Sensible look with Devo glasses and a beret. The rest of the group wears a few different goofy outfits like Santa suits, dresses and whatever else they found in grandpa's closet. The Young Adults also feature a bald, fat saxophone player named Rudy Cheeks who sings their silliest songs. Besides the film's title track, their repertoire includes tunes like "Do the Heimlich," "Kill Yourself" and "I Married a Tree." Members of the band The Smithereens play background characters in the bar. Aside from a couple of new wave-looking women in a crowd shot, there really are no traditional punks in Complex World, but the film's darkly humorous, nihilistic anti-Reagan Era vibe is squarely planted in the '80s. (*SH*)



JAWBREAKER

Dir. Darren Stein / 1999

Twenty-something "teens" are wannabe Heathers,
but choke on their own ambition.

A birthday prank goes terribly wrong and the three most popular girls in school end up outside a diner with a trunkful of dead best friend. The accidental murderesses try to go about their day as normal, but are reminded of their misdeed at every turn. In one girl's home ec class, she cracks open an egg and watches in horror as a bloody yolk dumps out into her bowl. Her cooking partner, a bush league punk with a purple-tipped bob, doesn't help when she exclaims, "Cool! You got a stillborn!"

Overcome with fear, the girls resolve to cover up their misdeed by staging a false crime scene, doing their friend the disservice of making her death appear to be the result of kinky sex. But, when a nerdy classmate accidentally gets mixed up in their scheme, the girls decide to give her the classic movie makeover treatment, offering her generic beauty, popularity and the glory of sexual harassment in exchange for silence. Of course, she agrees, and is thus transformed from Fern (the human name equivalent of "Blog") into Vylette. Her triumphant slow-mo hallway debut sets the stage for an unforeseen power shift and she quickly surpasses her creators, commanding her own army of underlings to save her seats, as well as a snarling, juvie bruiser to stand guard over her favorite bathroom stall.

Meanwhile, the one remorseful member of the killer clique distances herself, signaling her secession by sitting with the (gasp) PUNKS during lunch. Her former friends mock her for joining the ranks of the "body art rejects." But, with her perfectly coiffed flip and prim jacket, she clearly doesn't belong next to a blue-plumed mohawk and the purple-tipped home ec misfit performing air cunnilingus in the direction of a scowling Rose McGowan (who, ironically, would be a much better fit at their table than amongst her own waifish, tan companions).

The filmmakers essentially plundered *Heathers* and *Clueless* to come up with the script, and punched up the sexual depravity to give it the edge that they believed the Marilyn Manson set would expect—even giving their dark overlord a brief, unpleasant cameo as a greasy pervert. The film also features appearances by stars who should have known better: Pam Grier as a tough detective, Jeff Conaway as a concerned dad, and wasted, half-second peeks of P.J. Soles and William Katt as the parents of the murdered girl. But, really, a half second is the maximum amount of time anyone should spend watching this film, so it works out. (*LAF*)

JEKYLL AND HYDE...TOGETHER AGAIN

Dir. Jerry Belson / 1982

Dr. Jekyll discovers a white powder that makes him
into wild party man Mr. Hyde.

The key to the film's success lies in the performance by Mark Blankfield as Jekyll and Hyde. He's beautifully spastic and over the top, portraying Hyde as a coked-up freak. Even the main credits get snorted right off the screen. He works at Our Lady of Pain and Suffering Hospital, along with Cassandra "Elvira" Peterson as a busty nurse and Tim Thomerson (*Trancers*) as a plastic surgeon who wears women's underwear. In what's every 12-year-old boy's favorite scene, he enlarges a woman's breasts to the size of mutant watermelons.

The punk portion is truly boombastic. Hyde goes to a club called Madame Woo Woo. Every type of punk and new waver imaginable is there. People slamdance while someone makes sushi. Note the kids in Devo outfits and the Adam Ant wannabe. The band playing is called Ivy & the Shitty Rainbows. The singer has lights in her hair, a dude with a mohawk plays guitar and an old blues musician handles keyboard. Mr. Hyde falls for Ivy and eventually starts to sport liberty spikes and a leather jacket with chains. In her first film role, Corinne Bohrer (*Joysticks*) appears uncredited. However, African-American dwarf Tony Cox is listed as "Lawn Jockey # 1." (*BC*)

THE JERKY BOYS: THE MOVIE

Dir. James Melkonian / 1995

Those crazy phone pranksters make the mob
mad with their antics.

Tom Jones appears in an early scene to sing "Are You Gonna Go My Way." His talent has made him a god among men. He didn't get famous by making gay jokes, but rather earned his reputation and fame through hard work and genuine ability. Unlike him, The Jerky Boys won't be in movies when they're in their late 50s. Because The Jerky Boys have no talent. That's a cold hard fact, my friends. Adopting a Woody Allen voice to talk about hemorrhoids isn't/hasn't been/never will be funny. It's also hard to make prank call albums when you can no longer pay your phone bill, which is probably why you don't hear from them anymore. Oh, and for a split second, a guy with a half shaved head and leather jacket can be seen leaving a rock club bathroom. (*BC*)

JOE'S APARTMENT

Dir. John Payson / 1996

Rich white people make a movie mocking the low-income
denizens of Manhattan slums.

After the coming apocalypse, the only things left will be rubble, cockroaches and brain-dead mutants waiting to die. These are the same components that comprise this gargantuan slice of '90s cinematic retardation based on a short made for MTV. Lifelong dud Jerry O'Connell is perfectly cast as Joe, a useless slob who moves into a rent-controlled apartment occupied by hyper-intelligent dancing cockroaches. In one scene, Joe agrees to play drums for a live rock show by performance artist Walter Shit. The venue is packed with outdated grunge castoffs, high-income goths and...wait for it...offensively depicted, wildly inaccurate punks, headbanging their mohawk wigs to the beat of a live set from Pussy Galore. The previously relevant rock group aren't the only ones dipping a toe in the cinematic cesspool; the film also features inexcusable appearances from the great Robert Vaughn and Paul Bartel, and even a one-second cameo from NYC independent filmmaking legend Nick Zedd. But despite their involvement, this movie is to entertainment what Hitler was to Judaism. (*ZC*)

JOHN RITTER: BEING OF SOUND MIND AND BODY

Dir. Dave Powers / 1980

Ritter shows off his talents as a comedian with skits
and behind-the-scenes rehearsal footage.

A T special fractured due to being terribly dated, but it's admirable that Ritter tried to do his own television thing apart from *Three's Company*. It's surprising to see Vincent Price t up in a non-horror role a a dating g . "The Rock Doctor" skit written by Bruce Vilanch is about a punk rocker named Nick Anger. Ritter plays Nick and has messy black/purple hair, a chain for a belt and a leather jacket that says "Punk City" on the back. He sings this song:

"I'm just a prisoner in the dungeon of love
Just a convict subject to the torture of your love
So you can hit me, hurt me, beat me, whip me,
Squeeze me, squirt me, bruise me, abuse me."

Nick flails and punches himself in the face while singing. His manager is worried since his last album *Heat Rash* tanked. The rock doctor (Howard Hesseman) comes in to make him more accessible and mainstream. We then see Nick dressed as Liberace and singing a laid back version of his masochistic anthem. (*BC*)

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

Dirs. Rusty Lemorande & Albert Pyun / 1989

Young people fall in a hole.

This is exactly the shitwreck you'd expect from a movie written by people named Rusty and Kitty. British nanny Christina (Nicola Cowper) is relocated to Hawaii to babysit a glam metalhead's bottle-fed dog. She ends up stumbling into a cave along with two brothers, one of which is played by the career-moribund Ilan Mitchell-Smith of *Weird Science*. The group panics, sleeps, engages in aimless dream sequences and is besieged by large, harmless worms. Nasal comedian Emo Philips inexplicably appears in one of the dreams, shuffling around with no dialogue.

Eventually, Brian (Mitchell-Smith) falls through yet another hole into the subterranean metropolis of Atlantis, which looks like a cut-rate back-alley *Bladet* set with scattered garbage, blinking neon and leather-clad citizens shuffling in a neo-suicidal stupor. In this dead city, the existence of a surface world is constantly denied by a televised Big Brother character, even though all local technology and fashion is clearly straight from a surface-dwelling hippie's garage sale. An endless piped-in voice drones several laws that—if broken—are punishable by death. Several of the Atlanteans exhibit considerable new wave chic, with spiked hair, horizontal makeup and studded clothing. All locals secretly worship Wanda Saknussemm (swimsuit model Kathy Ireland), the first surface human who ever arrived i their world. For the role, Ireland wanders, grins and has zero speaking parts. Unfortunately, the same isn't true of her other science-fiction epic *Alien from* L (to which this film is a quasi-sequel).

Brian pops a standard surface-world VHS tape in a standard surface-world VCR and enjoys an Atlantean soap opera in which a porcupine-haired man in facepaint tells a bleach blond woman with a unibrow that he loves her deeply. The video belongs to his unlikely ally Shank, a feral underworld scavenger obsessed with our culture. At this point, the character of Brian's brother has disappeared entirely with no explanation, as if the actor just threw his script on the ground and walked off the set. In fact, montages over the closing credits reveal that a great deal more footage was shot and left out, sacrificing entire plot threads and leaving the movie as disjointed and pointless as an infant's daydream. Jules Verne, it's time to rise from the grave and kill some motherfuckers. (*ZC*)

JOY OF SEX

Dir. Martha Coolidge / 1984

A girl mistakenly thinks she w l die in a matter of weeks
and decides to lose her virginity before her demise.

The book featured bearded men having orgasms, whereas this film has Christopher Lloyd getting a blowjob from his wife. Punks are in the background of most group scenes. The few that stand out are: the bleached boy wearing a skull and crossbones, the girl with chemical-burnt hair who wears a stud bracelet while swimming and the African-American punk who shows up tardy to biology class and says, "We be cuttin' some worms." The punks love to hang out by the jukebox at the local diner and no one seems troubled by them. The film was director Coolidge's first after *Valley Girl* and features that film's Cameron Dye ("Fred") in a surprisingly un-punk role. Ernie Hudson is good as the principal who gets superglued to a chair. It should be noted that the movie contains a party scene where someone actually ends up with a lampshade on their head. (*BC*)

JOYSTICKS

Dir. Greydon Clark / 1983

Video madness unleashed!!!

This film is the only evidence needed to prove that 1983 was mankind's cultural apex. Sure, on paper it's *Porky's* in a video arcade, but don't be fooled. This is lowbrow entertainment in its highest form; an ideally balanced, comedic laserchainsaw of bodily function

gags and highly advanced '80s insanity. The theme song alone is a decades-erasing timewarp, a synthesized arena rock anthem extolling the majesty of "Totally Awesome Video Gaaaaames!" and leading into an 88-minute avalanche of manic, explosive FUN.

Teen entrepreneur Jeff Bailey (Scott McGinnis) runs the popular local video arcade with the assistance of token scrawny nerd Eugene (Leif Green) and token fat slob Dorfus (Jim Greenleaf). The garishly painted hangout is a magnet to fun-seekers across River City, drawing valley girls, vatos, celebrity impersonators and—most impressively—new wave video victim King Vidiot (Jon Gries) and his Vidiot disciples, each a candy-colored spacepunk with a multihued bouffant and airbrushed makeup. The King lords over them with absolute authority, gutter-regal in his studded jacket, boots, braces and blue/fuchsia hair. Their crew attacks the arcade daily under an unbreakable spell of gaming fever, dispersing to their favorite machines with vocally mimicked Pac-Man sounds.

King Vidiot's passions range beyond the digital when he desperately attempts to woo a hideous man in drag. Rejected, he grabs his own crotch, howls like a shot dog and crumbles to the pavement in anguish. Later, after griping about a particularly heated game of Satan's Hollow with Dorfus, he's banned from the arcade. As the Vidiots storm out to the parking lot (and destroy a child's bicycle in punk rage), they're approached by rampaging recreation-hater Joseph Rutter (Joe Don Baker), who enlists Vidiot's aid in shutting the business down for good. At first, the King is hesitant to ally with the formal businessman, but when Rutter promises him his very own arcade machine, Vidiot eats a potted plant and flops onto the floor in a seizure of delight. The following morning, the Vidiots storm the arcade on miniature toy motorcycles (*"Wheeeeels!"*), creating a ruckus that draws enough negative media attention to bring Rutter's villainous plot to fruition.

As a production, *Joysticks* has its limitations. As a viewing experience, it's flawless. Every frame is drive-in outrageousness incarnate, and Gries' performance as King Vidiot is nothing short of spastic genius. He's not alone; every member of the cast shines in their role, most notably Corinne Bohrer as Rutter's shrill, rebellious daughter Patsy and Hugo Stanger as Jeff's wheelchair-bound-but-still-swingin' grandpa. The film wildly flaunts everything about the '80s that's so sorely lacking in modern culture, begging the viewer to renounce modern technology in the name of pixelated 8-bit satisfaction. Director Greydon Clark (*Satan's Cheerleaders; Black Shampoo*) had been a staple of the exploitation industry since the '60s, but it was with *Joysticks* that he found a perfect balance of comedy, nudity and adrenaline. Anyone who scoffs at the modesty of this or other low-budget masterpieces of the era should be shot in the face...it was movies like *Joysticks* that made this nation great, built the VHS empire and shaped the finest decade in human history! *TOTALLY AWESOME VIDEO GAAAAAAAAAAMES!!!!!* (ZC)

JON GRIES

"King Vidiot" – *JOYSTICKS*

DAM: How did you end up in *Joysticks*?

JG: It was a regular audition. My agent at the time called me and said, "There's this film..." There wasn't even a script to get me. I just remember that I had been so long without a job. I'd been living in New York, studying. And I couldn't get work.

I was living with a girl named Talia Balsam, Martin Balsam's daughter, and her mother was Joyce Van Patten. So the whole family was professionals, all the Van Patten boys. I was in this environment of successful, working actors all the time. Every time I'd go over there, I was the guy that couldn't get work. Horrible. It was always, "Oh yeah, Talia's boyfriend. His dad was a director, so he's an actor, kinda." Aaauugghh...just kill me now.

So this movie comes up, and I figured I've gotta get this job because at least it's a character that stands out in the film. I worked my ass off for it, went in and auditioned. I think it was just one audition and that was it. Unlike *Real Genius*, where I had to go in again and again. I remember that I made up a story for them, and I just pulled it out of nowhere: "King Vidiot...he's born out of the oils on the coins that go into the video games." Total malarkey, but I just needed to say something because I wanted that job so bad. And it happened.

Were you auditioning directly for director Greydon Clark at that time?

Yeah, Greydon Clark and all the producers. I knew nothing about him. He was just this guy that looked like Dennis the Menace's father. His hair was a little bit longer. Even though he acted like he was somewhat hip, he was definitely of that older generation of filmmakers, of my father's generation. That was a distinctive line then, and this was at the tail end of that era of Hollywood. His whole demeanor showed it.

Did he ask you to work with him again later?

I didn't know what he had done afterwards, and he didn't contact me. The producers had talked about something, but it just kinda drifted. I can't remember what month we shot *Joysticks* in, but it was in '81 or early '82. But they all kept saying, "You are going to be a star, young man."

I've had a very odd career. I think a lot of it was just due to my own unpreparedness. I'd sometimes be up for a movie, and I'd want it so badly that I'd freak myself out and end up not preparing properly. I'd think, "If I prepare too much, then I'll be horrible. Let me see if I can just fly through this." And then bang, I'd be awful.

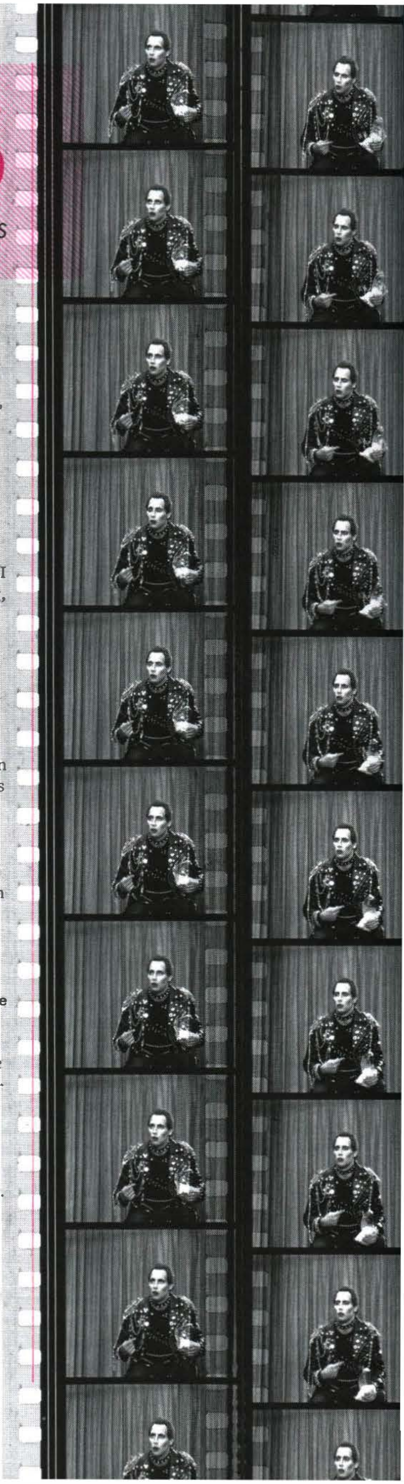
With *Joysticks*, it was just a job and I had to get that job. It's interesting to watch it now and see the level of commitment. I did not break character in any scene. The character never relaxes, and I also never relaxed. I think my favorite moment, which wasn't even prominent in the movie, is when Joe Don Baker reaches out to shake my hand. And I go to spit in his hand so he pulls it away. I was just so into the character, and that stupid little moment makes me kinda proud. He and I connected well while we were working on the film. He was a really nice guy, always laughing and having a good time, even though his character was uptight.

What was the original pitch for the movie like?

It just talks about the lead character Jeff, and how he takes over a video arcade from his grandfather. And the local politician tries to take him down. It was something basic like that. At that point in my career, I rarely got a script to read when it came time for auditions. My agents never had enough clout to get me a script. I was always just another knucklehead struggling.

What was the public reaction to the movie? Was there any kind of premiere?

This is the honest truth. I think, through my entire career, I've only been to three premieres of films I was actually



in. *The Rundown* was one, *The Astronaut Farmer* was another. I was not invited to *Get Shorty*. Either that, or the tickets went to my agent at the time and she used 'em. For *Joysticks*, we may have had a cast and crew screening, and that was it. What Clark was gonna do was to take the film across the country. Take out ads in a certain market, saturate it, open the movie and shut down after a week. If that. Maybe just a weekend. Then close up and go to the next city. So there was no reaction. My attitude was just, "Get it out of the city as fast as possible. Don't open it here!" [Laughs.] I hoped nobody would ever go see it.

And what was your personal reaction when you saw it for the first time?

When I saw the movie...well, part of it was that I couldn't believe how bad the movie was. And I was embarrassed by my performance. I was. You go through these phases where you consider what goes into a nuanced performance. And there were absolutely *no* nuances in that performance. It was balls-to-the-wall the whole time, chewing furniture. And it was schlock, I know, a teen exploitation film. But I didn't want all the people I knew who were now doing other movies to see me doing this.

Did they?

None of'em. [Laughs.] I think my girlfriend saw it. She probably hated it.

Were you ever recognized as King Vidiot after that?

Maybe...once. I never get recognized. Maybe as Lazlo from *Real Genius*, I got recognized a few times. But not Vidiot. The blue hair and makeup protected my identity.

Were you personally interested in punk at the time?

You know I'd go to these clubs in LA like Club X and The AntiClub. I was friends with a band called The White Trash Debutantes. I'm even playing a punk festival this year with them at what used to be the Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco. I met them around the time that I did *Joysticks*, and I was always going to those clubs. I was playing music with some guys then, but we never ended up playing live, our drummer couldn't speak English...it just didn't really happen. We didn't even have a name for the group.

Was there a specific person that was responsible for the look of King Vidiot?

I loved the way the Sex Pistols looked. And Ian Dury and The Blockheads, Richard Hell and The Voidoids...all these guys had certain looks that made their way into King Vidiot. Sid Vicious is an obvious one...definitely an inspiration.

Where was the arcade?

There was a crappy little sound stage on Cahuenga in Hollywood. It was like a tabletop. They'd probably go in there and shoot Rice Krispies commercials. So they just built this rinky-dink arcade in there. The house was in Hancock Park, and the parking lot of the arcade was really just the parking lot outside.

The female Vidiots are even more insane-looking.

That was all in the script. The female Vidiots were always with me. When I read it in the script, I was excited because I thought they were going to be really sexy—

They are!

[Laughs.] OK, they are. But these were real punk girls. Some of them already had their hair colored. I think two were actual punks, and the others were actresses just trying to get somewhere. So I thought they were gonna be like the party girls on the set, but the Vidiots were more down to earth, and really sweet. We'd come up with stuff like doing the Pac-Man noise. Much to Greydon Clark's credit, he always had this energy, and wanted us to keep things like that going, and keep our energy up too. He was the one with the famous quote, "Listen, when you're making a film, if worse comes to worse, pan down to the cleavage!"

There's the scene where you're on those tiny motorbikes. It seems like a joke without a set-up.

Yeah! They just got those bikes so they wrote them in. That's literally how it was done. At one point, it said, "they ride up on motorcycles." And either someone wanted us to show up on something different...or it was just cheaper to get these little bikes. [Laughs.] As hard as it was to watch the movie for the first time, I remember I was excited to see the little motor-scooter part.

What about the alternate title "Video Madness"?

That was originally the name of the film. And when I read for it and when it was being shot, I liked telling people that name. There was something kind of cool about the name, plus it wasn't so pornographic. So when the title got changed, I still referred to it as "Video Madness" because I didn't want to say "Joysticks." Every time I would mention the new title, I felt I needed to explain that it wasn't softcore porn. I was so aware of my position as a fledgling actor in my early 20s, low on the food chain, and I was trying to not appear all rinky-dink.

And then you saw the movie, and it was all rinky-dink.

Yes. I can say that I was so surprised by the sex in the film. But at the same time, I'm so glad the film had that, because that type of comedy doesn't exist anymore. Now, everything is either severe violence, or if there IS sex, it's going to go too far. There's no middle ground where someone's just pulling their shirt off.

It was a long time ago, but I do remember the feeling of really enjoying going to work every day and doing the damn film. One thing's for sure; with all the nudity and everything, I still never hooked up with anybody during the film. I'd be standing there thinking, "Gosh, maybe someday I can date a girl like that." But none of the Vidiots would even go on a date with me... and I was their king!

GREYDON CLARK

Director – *JOYSTICKS*

GC: Basically, I was making a picture a year. In my career, I've been asked what makes a successful picture. To me, that's if the picture was successful enough to allow me to make another picture. I was down in San Antonio, Texas for a preview of *Wacko*. I walked into the theater—it was one of these multiplexes with ten or 12 screens—and in the lobby, I looked over and there was a whole line of mostly young men, and I thought, my God, what's going on, are they giving away free popcorn or something? I walked over there and it was a video arcade machine. I'd never even seen one before. I looked at it and people were waiting for the guy to lose his quarter so they could move up and get the next game because there was only one or two machines. I looked in and thought, wow, this would be an interesting idea for a movie.

I came back to Los Angeles, and I started to research video arcades. I went to one in the San Fernando Valley and saw how they worked and what they were and I became even more enthused about doing a movie centered around an arcade. I was working with a fellow by the name of Curtis Burch, he was helping me write, edit and produce four or five pictures. He and a couple of other guys—Al Gomez and Mickey Epps—and I sat down and we devised a storyline. We wrote the script, and I went to the distributor for *Wacko* and I said to them that I had my best idea since *Black Shampoo*. At the time it was called "Video Madness," and I pitched him this idea of the movie based around a video arcade. He thought it was great, so we made our deal for production.

Because I had such a good relationship with Joe Don Baker, I offered him the role of the father who protests that his daughter is at the evil video arcade, and he agreed to do it. The picture was made in 1982, released in '83. While I was making it, I was searching for a better title than "Video Madness," and I came across the idea of "Joystick." I came up with the idea of these big screens that the two competitors could use to play against one another because I wanted to make a visual representation that would be better than just the normal-sized video arcade game. So, anyhow, I approached the distributor with my new title. He said, "Oh my God... we can't do that, because of the double meaning of the word joystick." And I said, "Well, I think it's a terrific idea." So, we were walking across the street to have lunch from the editing room and there was a kid—12, 13, 14, something like that—who was waiting for a bus. So I said, "Hey, kid, listen, if I say the word 'joystick' what do you think?" And he says, "I know what you want me to say, but I wouldn't say that. I'd say the video game thing."

So I convinced the distributor, who then decided that if he called it "Joysticks," the plural, that he wouldn't have as much trouble. Anyhow, I didn't see the difference between "joystick" and "joystickS," so we called it *Joysticks*. The picture opened in the late winter or spring of 1983, and we were the #1 picture in the whole United States! In fact, *Entertainment Tonight*, which was a fairly new television show then, said, "I don't understand how a picture nobody ever heard of could be the #1-grossing movie in the country." Well, the kids had heard of it, and they knew what joysticks were, and the picture paid off for them. There were a lot of laughs, and people really liked the movie.

DAM: The movie has really great '80s design, even though you were working with a very limited budget. Where was it shot? Did you guys create the arcade for that movie?

Yes, we did. My first thought is usually to shoot things practical, on an existing location. I went to a number of arcades in Los Angeles trying to figure out how I could shoot them. Now this was the heyday of video arcades, so they were jammed with customers, and we would have had to film from maybe midnight until noon the next day. And they weren't big enough where I could put lights in and so forth. So, it became obvious to me that I had to build an interior set.

We found a small soundstage in Hollywood. I worked with an art director by the name of Donn Greer, who was really very good—I used him on half a dozen or more pictures—working on a very limited budget. The entire shooting schedule was three weeks and I would guess that the arcade was probably two of them. So we rented the video games, brought them in, he put up all the flats and the reflective wall coverings and photographs and he built the stage, the platform, so I could shoot on multiple levels. I think the picture does have a good look to it, and I was very pleased with the cast, I think they worked.

Scott McGinnis, who played the young leading man, also was the lead in *Wacko*. He was very good in it. I remember as we were building the scenes together, Curtis Burch, my assistant, who was one of the writers as well as one of the editors on it, said to me, "Sheesh, if I was 16, I would love this picture." And I said, "Burch, you're 26 and you love the picture."

You mentioned Scott McGinnis, but for me THE performance in that movie is Jon Gries as King Vidiot. How did he end up being cast in that role?

I remember distinctly he walked in the office—and he's kind of a shy fellow, when you first talk to him you don't get a lot of feeling or emotion from him—but the moment he stood up and started to read the character, you could see this guy's terrific. It was an easy job to cast him.

Yeah, he's so much fun in that movie, and then he's got the little robotic Vidiot followers.

Yes, the Vidiots. You know, I made them all have the blondish-orangeish hair to kind of look like Ms. Pac Man, and then I had them moving as if the Ms. Pac Man had leapt off the video screen onto real life. So they kind of have that herky-jerky movement.

That was the first time that you'd had any kind of punk or new wave characters in your movies. But what was your exposure or interaction with the punk scene at that time?

Well, I have always been a political person. I'm very interested in current events and what's happening in the world. Obviously, the punk scene was in its heyday, they were all over the news and I always tried to incorporate what's going on at the time. If we were making a modern-day picture, especially if we're making a picture about video arcades, it just seemed natural that you would have some punks there.

One of the things that a lot of the people like about Joysticks is that the characters—even though there was a certain friction between the punks and the gamers—they all really liked each other and they were decent to one another. The Eugene character played by Leif Green, the dorky kid if you will, who comes in the arcade...yeah, he's teased and he's made fun of, but you can see that Dorfus and Jeff, the two characters that run the arcade, have feelings for him and are trying to help him get over his shyness and awkwardness. And the same goes for the punks: they don't particularly like the punks, but they still put up with them and have interactions with them and there's not a bitter, angry feeling toward any of them. Many people have commented that they like that the groups are all at least decent to one another.

Was it you who came up with the outrageous aesthetic for the whole Vidiot crew?

Listen. If you like it, I'll take credit for it...if you don't like it, I'll blame somebody else.

I do. I love it.

Well then I did it.

JUBILEE

Dir. Derek Jarman / 1977

A confusion-fueled UK new wave feminist apocalypse.

Queen Elizabeth I (Jenny Runacre) is transported by a spandex-clad man-angel to a decimated, punk post-modern England. Face-painted female militias comb the streets for opposition, wiping out primarily male enemies with machine guns and/or high heels. Their leader is the endlessly pontificating Amyl Nitrate, who dresses like a stepmom, draws mathematical angles on her face and has hair like a fountain of butter. Her gang roams the streets, blurting out declarations of society's decline and performing lackluster acts of sadism, usually at the hand of the upright Bod (also Jenny Runacre, playing an anarchic counter to her royalty role). The ladies' tolerated mascot is Mad (Toyah Willcox), a cherubic spazz in military fatigues who Willcox herself would later describe as "a fat little punk bulldyke." Along the way, they encounter pulseless characters like would-be rocker The Kid, played by a 23-year-old Adam Ant making his feature film debut. Though withdrawn, he erupts at one point in a great performance of the Ants' "Plastic Surgery."

Innocent people are assaulted. Public property is destroyed. Young male musicians are used as human dildos and suffocated in neon plastic. Bisexual crucifixion reenactments share rooms with high society dub wave dance parties. During one particularly anxious night of boredom, the girls set out to execute mass-marketed TV rock icon Lounge Lizard (groundbreaking punk gender warrior Wayne/Jayne County).

Big business, the war industry, record companies and everything else are lambasted in slumber-inducing British drones. Things eventually wind down in a vaguely climactic haze of violence, vengeance and loss, with a pinch of Hitler thrown in for kicks. Remove the calculated punk rage and the foundation of the film is Jarman's penchant for pretentious imagery. Barbed wire maypoles, symbolic wreckage, words carved in flesh and sprinkled with salt. A ballerina teetles around a bonfire while a masked naked man looks on. Catchy terms like "CHAOS" and "PRETTY VACANT" are scrawled on walls, globes and faces. And of course, there's the laziest of all surreality conventions: an outrageously costumed dwarf stumbling through the aimlessness.

Jarman had been shooting 8mm guerrilla footage of England's art circles for years, but was inspired to make his first feature by the intensity and disdain of the punk movement. He made alliances in the scene, casting at rock shows and via friends' friends, allowing the non-actors to choose their own parts. Amyl Nitrate was played by Jordan, an employee at Vivienne Westwood's influential SEX and Seditionaries punk fashion emporiums. "Little" Nell Campbell is the sex-crazed, love-starved Crabs. Members of The Slits and Siouxsie & the Banshees make unexpected cameos.

Shooting locations were used without authorization and props and costumes were cobbled together from garbage and housepaint. People—including members of the cast—seem to be divided as to whether the final product is artistically indispensable or simply time-draining. When it was released, *Jubilee* was condemned by not only critics, but "high profile" punks like Westwood. To Jarman's credit, he supposedly paid little mind to these reactions, echoing a sentiment from the film's eternally amused character Borgia: "As long as the music's loud enough, we won't hear the world falling apart." *(ZC)*

JUDGE DREDD

Dir. Danny Cannon / 1995

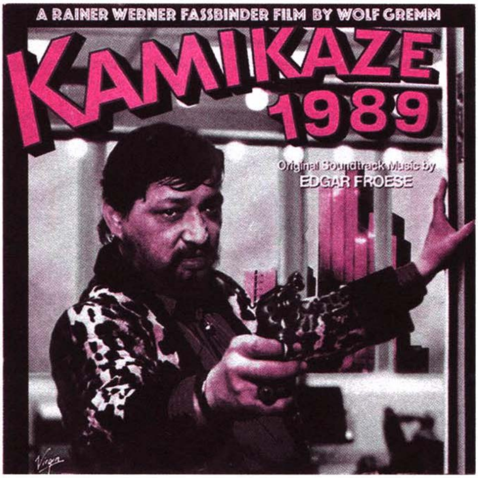
In the future, specialized law officers are judge, jury and executioner.

Based on a comic book, deemed a ripoff of *Blade Runner* and *RoboCop*, and entertaining enough to give you more than your money's worth. Sylvester Stallone is pretty great here. The reason he's the best of all the late 20th century action stars is that he puts everything into every role he plays, be it big-budget trash like this or award-winners like *Rocky* or *Cop Land*. He always seems to be having fun and isn't afraid to overact like a sonofagun. Supposedly, Stanley Kubrick was obsessed with the animatronic robot in this film, and it is impressive considering the CGI shit that is downloaded onto our movie screens these days. I'd like to think that Kubrick was also fixated with this movie because of Mr. Rob Schneider. This was made in that weird little pocket of the '90s when Schneider was in action movies like *Demolition Man*, *Surf Ninjas* and *Knock Off* with Van Damme. Punks show up in just about every crowd scene, ducking as Sly buzzes over them on his futurebike. Hey, how about that track The Cure supplied for the closing credits, "The Dredd Song." Whoooops. *(BC)*

KAMIKAZE 89

Dir. Wolf Gremm / 1982

Brilliant director Rainer Werner Fassbinder dies in a leopard-skin suit while solving the most convoluted mystery since *The Big Sleep*.


A RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER FILM BY WOLF GREMM
KAMIKAZE 1989
Original Soundtrack Music by
EDGAR FROESE
Virgin

It's the far-flung future of the year 1989. Top detective Jansen (Fassbinder) has been called to investigate the mysterious murder/suicide of a top executive for a major German industrial power. Meanwhile, terrorist faction Krysmopompas is spreading anarchy and dissent all over technology-laden Berlin. Sadly, this punked-out '80s thriller is long on style but short on ideas. Like other futuristic "lone wolf" arthouse mysteries like Lars Von Trier's *The Element of Crime* and Claude Chabrol's *Club Extinction*, this film works best when you don't think about the plot. Just bask in the cool offbeat performance of brilliant auteur Fassbinder. Decked out in the leopard-skin suit he would eventually be buried in (RWF would die 48 hours after filming wrapped, ravaged by drugs and alcohol), Fassbinder's world-weary and cynical portrayal leaves one wishing for future acting roles. Gunther Kaufmann, a frequent actor in Fassbinder's films, provides an easy chemistry and comic relief as Jansen's clueless partner. Other highlights include the Edgar Froese (Tangerine Dream) soundtrack and cameo from Euro-film staple Franco Nero. Watching this film will leave any Fassbinder fanatic starving for a release of his television series *Welt Am Draht* (*World on a Wire*), a program that heavily influenced *Blade Runner* with its theme of robots attempting to imitate humans, and was the director's only foray into full-scale science fiction. (*JS*)

KAMIKAZE HEARTS

Dir. Juliet Boshore / 1986

Fact vs. fiction in the story of a real-life romance within the adult film industry.

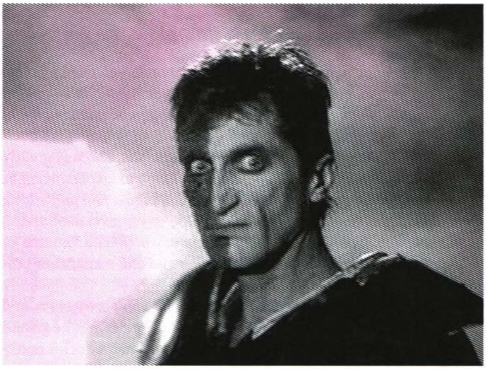
This unrepentant semi-documentary follows the uniquely painful lives of romantically entangled porn actresses/junkies Sharon Mitchell and Tigr Mennett. The two of them met on camera years earlier, performing a sex scene together before they'd ever shared a word. From that moment, they maintained an intense relationship that consumes all aspects of their lives, professional and otherwise. Even after retiring from the screen, Tigr stays involved to handle production work, dutifully watching her girlfriend grinding against countless other industry personalities. One of her co-performers on the documented shoot is a listless bleached starlet who entered the porn world after the breakup of her punk band The Blowdryers.

Mennett and Mitchell start to come apart over the course of the doc, rediscovering their closeness in a bittersweet segment of graphic intravenous drug use. *Kamikaze Hearts* is an assault on the viewer's will to live, and a very effective chronicle of a self-destructive porn star's inability to fully experience the best relationship of her life. Mitchell is a fascinating subject, constantly performing and vying for the camera, but never offering a glimpse of vulnerability. Instead, when attempting to open up, she says, "Ronald Reagan is my idol. I collect snakes. I read dictionaries, comic books and maps." (*ZC*)

KARATE COP

Dir. Alan Roberts / 1991

A tiny hero arises from the ruins of civilization.



After another one of those dang Armageddons, the last pure-hearted man on earth is—ironically—a police officer. He's John Travis (Ronald L. Marchini): 5'4" of high-kickin', badge-wearin', peace-keepin' fury. He and his comically cowardly dog fall into the unenviable position of defending a group of children from countless hordes of cannibalistic mutants like Snaker, a deformed reptilian turdbag who says things like, "You haves to comes out sometime, cop...and whens you do, Snaker be's waiting!!" This radioactive moron's boss Lincoln is in even worse shape: a rotund, mustachioed, unmutated curiosity whose fashion sense is equal parts biker, Vietnam vet, Liberace and marginally post-apocalyptic punk, with his studded bracelets and industrial-bleached locked combed into a Bozofied mohawk. He lords over his beloved battle arena, where sweating warriors engage in fatal combat to the delight of the pustular crowd. One of the cheering spectators is a comparably presentable punk, his reddish hair and leather jacket practically suburban in contrast to the toxic maniacs on all sides. David Carradine appears just long enough to owe himself an apology. This film is the sequel to 1990 stinker *Omega Cop*, and though it features karate and a dog, it sadly has no relation to the late Bob Clark's 2004 film *Karate Dog*. (*ZC*)

THE KARATE KID

Dir. John G. Avildsen / 1984

An elderly Japanese immigrant asks a young Jersey boy to repeatedly apply and remove wax from his car, teaching him discipline, self-confidence and karate.

Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) moves from Newark, NJ to the San Fernando Valley and starts crushing on his high school classmate Ali (Elizabeth Shue). At the Halloween dance where Daniel comes dressed as the shower, Ali slips between his curtains for a bit of romance. One of her friends wonders what she sees in Daniel while her other pal, dressed up like a punk in purple leopard print, spikes and chains, wittily remarks, "She must be into fungus." He later runs afoul of Ali's ex-boyfriend Johnny and the evil Cobra Kai dojo. Daniel's karate is too weak to stand up to these trained bullies, but it's a good thing his neighbor is a master of his own personal style, Miyagi-do. Pat Morita was known primarily for playing Arnold on *Happy Days*, but received an Academy Award nomination for his performance as Mr. Miyagi, the serene old man who fled his home country, fought for America in World War II (while his wife and child died in an internment camp) and is always trying to catch flies with chopsticks. (*TS*)

THE SHORT FILMS OF RICHARD KERN

Though this book's primary goal is to cover onscreen punks in feature-length films and documentaries, it'd be an offensive oversight to exclude the work of one of New York's most venerated punk-era filmmakers because his filmography consists of shorts. Like Nick Zedd, Richard Kern moved to NYC in the late '70s, and was greatly inspired by the cultural avalanche that the city was experiencing at the time. After gaining experience in various media and publishing several issues of his zine *The Heroin Addict*, he entered the Super 8 scene and quickly became a member/purveyor of The Cinema of Transgression (a name coined by his colleague and sometimes-collaborator Zedd).

Kern's films employed several of the actors and creators who'd worked in various other cinematic projects in the city, but he gained attention due to the almost feral confrontational nature of his material. These obsession-fueled productions utilized studio apartments rather than studios, and were often so palpably animalistic or otherwise offensive that they inspired revulsion even in nausea-proof viewers. But Kern had more tricks up his sleeve than mere shock value; even when preaching to the converted by mocking religion or the family dynamic, his films are intelligently manipulative and genuinely discomforting.

Early effort *You Killed Me First* (1985) hits every mark mentioned, and is considered by some to be his most effective film. Young Elizabeth (Lung Leg) is the discontented black sheep of an all-American family. At the dinner table, Mom (performance artist/writer Karen Finley) and Dad (artist David Wojnarowicz) berate her until she's forced to take violent action. Wojnarowicz reappears in *Manhattan Love Suicides* segment *Stray Dogs* (also '85) as a near-boiling maniac stalking an even-tempered older man (Bill Rice). Eventually, the unhealthily enamored fan has what can best be described as a full-body aneurysm, blood vessels bursting and limbs dropping off like dead branches.

Notoriously, Kern's most regularly recurring theme is sex—often in its basest, most desperate, abusive and lonely forms. In *The Bitches* (1992), two women compete for the attention of a seemingly kept man (fellow filmmaker Charles Wing aka Charles Pinion) before he surrenders to them both. *Submit to Me* (1986) and its sequel *Submit to Me Now* (1987) feature nightmarish collages of pulsing psychedelic imagery laid over masturbation and self-abuse, the second featuring music by the Butthole Surfers. Unsurprisingly, the lead in *The Evil Cameraman* (1990) is played by the director himself, binding and torturing his female subjects in a fruitless attempt to yield the one perfect work of art. Its companion piece, *My Nightmare* (1993) features a photographer (again Kern) pleasuring himself to mental images of one of his models. When she arrives, she disappoints him, causing an emotional meltdown.

Of all his sex-specific films, the most vicious—and thus best known—is 1986's *Fingered*. Lydia Lunch stars as a phone sex professional who embarks on a murder-spree getaway with a man (Lunch's former boyfriend Marty Nation). The two bicker, slit innocents' throats and eventually compromise a kidnapped girl (Lung Leg, allegedly in an LSD spiral while shooting) who's already been sexually assaulted. Though the film features onscreen penetration, it's Kern's most accessibly constructed work of the period and—like him—has maintained an infamous reputation for decades. (*ZC*)

KIDNAPPED

Dir. Eric Mitchell / 1978

Disenchanted New Yorkers spend an unusual evening in a cramped apartment.

For his ambitious filmmaking experiment (which was also his directorial debut), Mitchell collected several of his collaborators for an open social session that degenerates into murderous debauchery. The often blank-eyed participants include Anya Phillips, Patti Astor and Mitchell himself. Another attendee is a black-booted leather punk who remains nearly silent for the duration. Mitchell proves to be his own most animated subject, desperately complimenting disinterested female guests when not luring the indoor loiterers into conversations and arguments. The gathering eventually (and unexpectedly) ramps up into a rubber-limbed dance party, as Mitchell leads the rug-cutting charge to Devo's "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." In the home stretch, they kidnap, bind and gag an unflappable stranger (Mudd Club founder Steve Mass), forcing the doomed man to oink at gunpoint until the creditless end. (*ZC*)

THE KIDS ARE UNITED

aka KIDS LIKE ME AND YOU

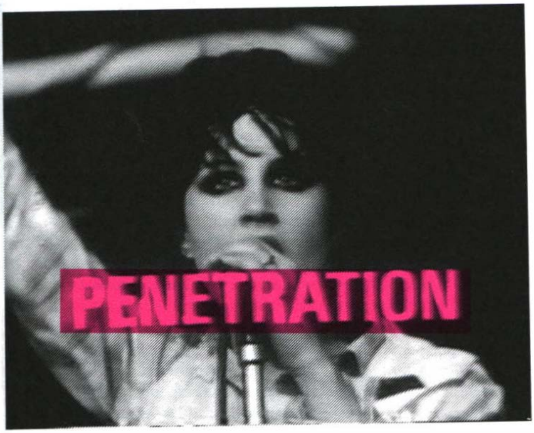
Dir. Peter MacDonald / 1979

Rare concert film featuring an impressive assortment of UK acts.

This document of the 1978 Reading Rock Festival is so rare, even fans of the bands depicted scarcely know of its existence. The television-length film features performances by Sham 69, The Jam, Ultravox, Penetration and the Pirates, with three songs each separated by brief interview segments and crowd shots.

The film came at a time when the festival was in transition; punk had made its presence known for the first time in the festival lineup, which previously had been a vehicle for R&B and progressive rock bands (though Ultravox were returning from a stint the previous year). The Pirates represent the old guard, wearing flouncy pirate clothes with one-time guitar god Mick Green stiffly bouncing up and down like a goofy dad to a shameful rendition of Johnny Kidd hit "Shakin' All Over." But considering how dated they seem in retrospect, the crowd is into them.

Ultravox sound great and crisper than all the others, but have zero stage presence. Penetration comes off as false, and frontwoman Pauline Murray claims Patti Smith as a primary influence. Smith—also on the bill at Reading '78—is nowhere to be seen in the film, which is focused exclusively on the opening night of the three-day festival. Headliner The Jam is fantastic; frontman Paul Weller is so blasé he chews gum throughout his whole performance. Supposedly he destroyed his guitar onstage, but sadly this outburst isn't captured.



Sham 69 opens with "Borstal Breakout" and singer Jimmy Pursey remains the anchor of the film; the young working-class punk with utopian ideals is contrasted sharply by the snide Weller who manages to turn everything he says into an insult. As they reflect on each other's music, Pursey commends Weller on his intelligent lyricism—while admitting to a more basic approach in his own—and Weller conversely points out that, while Sham 69 has a great effect on the audience, "it's too bad they have to communicate on that sort of level."

But Sham 69's rapport with their fans can't be dismissed. During their closing song, the stage is filled with punters, and thousands upon thousands of teenage festivalgoers chant in unison: "If the Kids Are United...They Will Never be Divided..." The always emotional Pursey breaks down in tears at the spectacle. (*KJ*)

KIDS IN THE HALL: BRAIN CANDY

Dir. Kelly Makin / 1996

A new anti-depressant called Gleemonex gets released to the world, along with some major side effects.

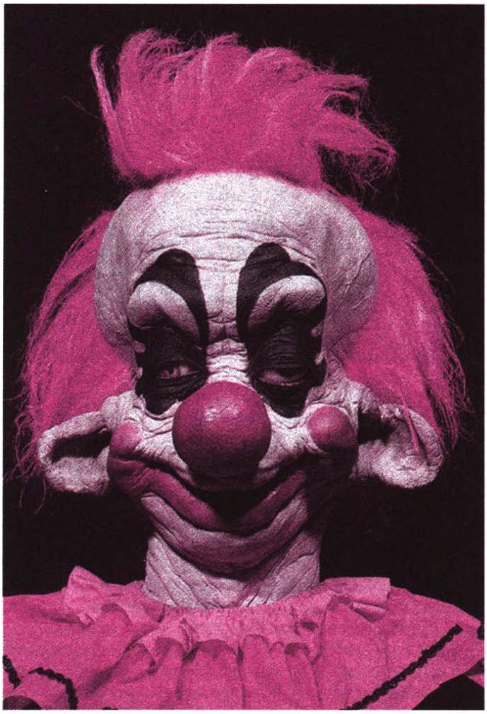
The Kids in the Hall were the cutting-edge sketch comedy the world needed after *SNL's* lapse into formulaic characters. Their movie was long awaited and many were disappointed. But, like a fine wine, this film gets better with age. Some of the jokes are downright mean, such as Cancer Boy, the suicidal father and "flipper baby" jabs. But it's all incredibly funny, and much better than most comedies made in the '90s. How could one not laugh at the random-bird-stuck-in-a-man's-eye bit. Bruce McCulloch plays a Danzig type who's famous for being depressed on stage. "Fuck *happy*," he shouts as various goths, punks and other folk dance and cheer. Later on he takes the anti-depressant and sings a cheerful song in a giant pie. I think this is funny. I really do. (*BC*)

KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE

Dir. Stephen Chiodo / 1988

A town is invaded by unstoppable red-nosed yuksters.

The most eyeball-electrocuting sci-fi/horror/comedy of the '80s, written and directed by the special effects wizards behind the Large Marge monsterface scene from *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*. A tent-shaped meteor crash-lands in the forest, releasing a neon-colored army of intergalactic facepainted creatures that mummify humans in cotton candy cocoons and slurp the sweetened blood through crazy straws. These diabolical bozos mow through the populace using only the most entertaining means: invisible cars; carnivorous shadow puppets; popcorn blasters; decapitating boxing matches; cyanide pie fights; hand-to-spinal-cord ventriloquism, and much, much more. The only people with the guts to stand up to these extraterrestrial sillybones are two kind-hearted teens and the horny local ice cream vendors. Watch for thundering man's man actor John Vernon (*Savage Streets; Chained Heat*) as the hardboiled small-town cop who just isn't gonna put up with this space clown shit. He also gets plenty steamed when a pale goth-punk gets caught drinking wine in the park with a pal. The two



lightweight nogoodniks get thrown in the holding cell, later to be joined by one of the klowns, who transforms them into delectable edibles. The cherry on top is the theme song by pioneering silly-punk band The Dickies. (*ZC*)

KILLING CARS

aka BLI T

Dir. Michael Ver oeven / 1986

An auto designer becomes swallowed in corporate intrigue.

Ralph Korda (*Das Boot*'s Jürgen Prochnow) races his custom car through the grimy streets of Berlin, splashing water on a cluster of angry punks on his way to a game of high-stakes backgammon. He's a self-spoiled vehicular engineer/ping-pong ball magnate who wears sunglasses after dark. Angry youths gather to picket his closing of the local teen center, which appears to cater strictly to rockers and new wave maniacs. One bleached leatherboy gets pulled off the fence and beaten by a cop. Later, Ralph plays open-air backgammon with one of the punks, which is very likely the only footage ever captured of a punk playing backgammon. This historic scene is followed by a couple of reckless juveniles arguing over who gets to tinker on a tiny Casio. A truck spins out of control and kills two punks in mid-makeout. The vengeful survivors roam the night, destroying cars manufactured by the company that shut down their hangout. Upping the ante, they break into the factory and unwittingly steal a $100,000,000 experimental car, which unleashes a tremendous wave of industrial espionage. Ralph is blamed for the theft, and must enlist the punks' aid before his own company destroys him and monopolizes the automotive production world. Sound exciting? No. Note: for no reason, the American DVD release includes the deeply questionable Casper the Friendly Ghost short *Spookin' About Africa*. (*ZC*)

THE KILLING OF AMERICA

Dir. Sheldon Renon / 1982

A documentary graphically chronicling the rise of violent crime in the U.S.

Compiled almost exclusively from archive footage dating from the mid-'50s to the time of the film's release, *The Killing of America* is a relentlessly vicious exploration of both infamous and forgotten crimes in the second half of the 20th century. It's presented with the brazen and unflinching style of a classic mondo film, but also simmers with a disaffected disgust that is clearly the product of the early '80s. A man is shot dead by police before the opening credits have even begun and soon the filmmakers are out cruising 42nd St., listening in on the police blotter, visiting crime scenes. As uncomfortable as it is to see real footage of victims of domestic violence, it's also quite exciting to see a marquee advertising a double bill of *Shogun Assassin* and *Humanoids from the Deep*. But the exploitation film nostalgia quickly vanishes as this film bombards the viewer with the shootings of Ronald Reagan, JFK, Martin Luther King Jr., George Wallace and Bobby Kennedy. It shows race riots in Los Angeles, soldiers in Vietnam, cops assaulting war protestors and the infamous image of General Loan executing a Vietnamese prisoner. So far, all the depicted violence arises from political motivations, but the film goes on to warn about the appearance of breed of killer who "doesn't want money or sex or revenge...it's a new kind of murder: the senseless killing of random strangers."

Charles Whitman's rifle attack on the University of Texas campus is punctuated by details of a long string of less-famous random murderers, including sidewalk sniper Sam Brown, who "came from outer space on the starship Enterprise with a secret message for Earth people," and the woman who started firing a gun at the school kids outside her window "because Mondays are always so boring." This incident was the inspiration for the Boomtown Rats song "I Don't Like Mondays" and is just one of the many grisly crimes in this film that have been sung about by bands, punk and otherwise. The Manson Family, Son of Sam and Jim Jones and the People's Temple all get their due. The film also features extended footage of James Hoskins, who took an entire television station hostage. While allowing himself to be interviewed by one of the station's reporters, Hoskins behaves very politely—making sure not to swear—and admits through tears that he murdered his girlfriend. When asked what point he'd like to make he responds, "I can't think of any point I want to make. Except give me a place where the police can come and get me. We're gonna shoot it out. And you people can leave." He ended up pulling the trigger on himself while sitting in the newscaster's chair.

Another dose of warped nostalgia is delivered when we get a peak of Hollywood Blvd. at its sleaziest, scummiest and most beautiful. Among the drugs, gangs and prostitutes roam an army of punks as "Homicide" by 999 blasts on the soundtrack. This leads directly into a long section on sex murderers, which seems to cover every notorious American serial killer in the last 40 years. Ed Kemper proudly proclaims, "I am an American and I kill Americans. I am a human being and I kill human beings." Meanwhile, a judge disgustedly tells Ted Bundy, "You went another way, pardner."

ALL OF THE FILM YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE IS REAL. NOTHING HAS BEEN STAGED.

The film's monotone narration was written by Leonard Schrader (brother of writer/director Paul Schrader) and attempts to transcend shock value by frequently making genuine and persuasive arguments against the proliferation of firearms and in favor of increased gun control. He asks, "Does the murder rate need to quadruple again before we've had enough to make us fight back?" The picture concludes its harrowing exposé with footage of John Lennon's memorial. This serene and mournful scene offers a rare glimpse of peace and feels almost jarring after so much carnage. Then, just as you've settled into its reflective mood, these words sardonically appear on the screen: "Two people were shot at this Central Park vigil. While you watched this movie five more of us were murdered. One was the random killing of a stranger." Brutal. (*TS*)

KILLING SPREE

Dir. Tim Ritter I 1987

Fearing his wife is cheating on him, a man boils over into a murderous rampage.

Ritter followed the straight-to-VHS success of *Truth or Dare?: A Critical Madness* with another film about a cuckolded psychopath. Actor Asbestos Felt returns, this time as the film's lead Tom, a once-burned newlywed who keeps his patient wife Leeza hidden away from all male temptations. He's haunted by nightmares of infidelity, including a hideous surreal segment where his 60-year-old co-worker Ben shoves his entire head into Leeza's engorged mouth. As Tom's paranoia mounts, Ben stops by the house with his 18-year-old girlfriend, who happens to be a giggling punk with a pet lizard. She wears a lace teddy and a huge orange boa-style mohawk, and immediately asks Tom if he's interested in three-way sex. She then tells him to get a purpose in life and announces she has to "take a whizz." He follows her to the restroom, decapitates her and bludgeons Ben to death with her severed dome.

Tom obsessively scans Leeza's diary, convinced that any man she interacts with is another sexual conquest. He builds an arsenal of weapons—screwdrivers, chainsaw, lawnmower, machete-tipped ceiling fans—and takes great pleasure in eradicating any threat to his happy home. Possible enemies include gardeners, repairmen and delivery boys, all of whom meet a grisly end.

As Ritter's productions are minimum-budget affairs, the participants in the film's many sex scenes are often visually challenging, like the chubby curtain installer who weathers a not-so-steamy shower wearing a pink cowboy hat. Additionally, the Casio sex jazz pumped in over these scenes isn't likely to send you into erotic overdrive. But the movie carries much of that now-dead shot-on-video sincerity, and several of the gore effects are ambitious and effective. The severed punk head is not one of them. (*ZC*)

KINDERGARTEN COP

Dir. Ivan Reitman I 1990

Arnold Schwarzenegger touches children in the most special place of all...their hearts.

Det. John Kimble (Schwarzenegger) is a tough cop with a first-rate pedigree who pounds the streets of Los Angeles. His longtime nemesis, drug kingpin Cullen Crisp (Richard Tyson), is ruthless and always manages to find a way out of trouble. Crisp's only weakness is his son, who was taken by his ex-wife, so when one of his drug runners claims to have information about her whereabouts, they arrange a meeting at the mall. Kimble stealthily tails Crisp through the shops like a cheetah stalking a gazelle, totally blending into the scenery with his hulking body, floor-length trench coat and indoor sunglasses. Crisp arrives at a utility room where the informant is nervously waiting. The snitch tries to get some money for his assistance, but is instead rewarded with a gut full of bullets while his Nancy Spungen-esque girlfriend watches from behind a large column. Kimble thinks her testimony will finally give him the break he needs to keep Crisp behind bars, but she refuses to ID the murderer and leaves the station. Frustrated, Kimble follows her to Hollywood Blvd.; pushing past a half-shaved, half-dressed punk who offers him a good time, he barges into a squalid drug den where his witness is slumped down on the couch. He quickly convinces her to cooperate by threatening to hang out with her non-stop until the end of time.

With Crisp behind bars, Kimble and his partner Pheobe O'Hara (Pamela Reed) travel to Astoria, OR to find the ex-wife who can put Crisp away for good, but all they know is that her son attends the local kindergarten. When Phoebe gets sick, Kimble has to take over, entering a classroom where he's greeted by death-obsessed, incontinent, brutally honest, budding perverts; in other words, the only 6-year-olds on film that you won't wish had been abortions. Through a series of inquisitions disguised as education, he tries to figure out which kid is Crisp's.

Although this looks like a family movie, it's definitely not. There are murders, guns galore, fights, drug use, strong language, mild sexual situations and child abuse. It's also really funny, with good performances by Schwarzenegger and Reed, who have a great platonic chemistry. No matter how much you want to hate it, and despite all it has going against it, *Kindergarten Cop* works. (*LAF*)

THE KING OF COMEDY

Dir. Martin Scorsese I 1982

Unfunny Rupert Pupkin stalks comedian Jerry Langford in an attempt to get into show business.

Pupkin is a person who doesn't recognize his limitations. He works hard at something that he's no good at and pathetically vies for awards that he doesn't deserve. Robert De Niro gives his most underrated performance as this tragic figure in one of the most depressing "comedies" ever made. Pupkin is more sadly delusional than *Taxi Driver's* Travis Bickle, as he spends his time in the basement telling jokes to cardboard cutouts of celebrities. Jerry Lewis is at his most contained as Langford. When he screams, it's only out of the pain that Pupkin puts him through.

Scorsese's film explores the concept of fame. People growing up in America think that success means being on TV, and, for those who are famous, the destruction of privacy comes with that success. Members of The Clash, Kosmo Vinyl (credited as Kosmo Vynil) and Don Letts (credited as Dom Letts) have truly subtle cameos as street scum that stand among a crowd watching an angry Sandra Bernhard. The best supporting role comes from Scorsese's mother Catherine as Pupkin's suffering mom, who is only heard off-screen yelling at her moronic son. (*BC*)

KING RALPH

Dir. David S. Ward / 1991

A broke, low-class average American Joe assumes the throne
and teaches England how to party.

Emlyn Williams w a British author, actor, playwright and—despite his name—man. In a career that spanned more than 60 years, he w respected in all aspects of the entertainment industry and had friends everywhere, from Shakespearean professors to royalty. He wrote dialogue for Alfred Hitchcock features, plays that would b adapted into Bette Davis dramas, a one-man stage act on the life of Charles Dickens and, most notably, the novel *Headlong*, which, just four years after Williams' death, would see the silver-screen treatment (and a full-scale Burger King promotion) in the form of *King Ralph*.

John Goodman plays the titular hero in this tried-and-true slob-makes-good fairytale. It's hijinks galore when fun-lovin', hard-bowlin' Las Vegas lounge singer Ralph gets invited to the UK to take over for a suddenly deceased royal family. The news of their unexpected passing is so shocking to Mother England's denizens that a mohawked leather punk named Dysentery breaks down in tears while watching the news story on T . Ralph's transition to high society is filled with half-hearted gags and chuckle-proof scenarios, but Goodman manages to maintain his ever-present charm throughout. Surprise roles by Peter O'Toole and John Hurt make you sure that some casting agent is in a bread line somewhere. By the film's inevitable good-times ending, we've learned that lying is wrong, women with deep voices are totally repulsive and a fat white guy singing a Little Richard song is the recipe for true entertainment. (*ZC*)

KNIGHTS OF THE CITY

Dir. Dominic Orlando / 1986

Members of a gang try to score a rap recording deal while
simultaneously dishing out beatings to their street rivals.

Troy, Mookie and Joey dream of becoming famous rappers, but are preoccupied with a war against a gang of evil punks called The Mechanix. The movie exists in a fantasy world of eternal night, where steam billows from every grate (lit by omnipresent colored neon) and no matter where you go, there's always someone breakdancing. The film was shot in Miami, but takes place in a city where no citizen is without an elaborate and calamitously fashionless costume. Most people look like rap fans, but there are also a healthy number of punks parading around in bondage pants,

chains and torn denim. After the gang fails to actually record anything, they decide to bust a move and dance their way to a blue ribbon in a talent contest. But The Mechanix are still thirsty for blood. The film is a flimsy mix of various teen gang movie tropes and never really comes together. The best part is when the gang lands in jail only to find themselves locked up with The Fat Boys and Kurtis Blow, who dish out some jailhouse raps: "We're in jail! Because we fail! We got no bail! We're in *jail*!"

More interesting than the film is the story behind it. The executive producer was a guy named Michael Franzese, who was reputedly the biggest Mafia money-earner since Al Capone. He was the son of a Colombo family underboss and reportedly took in an average six-to-eight million dollars a week running all sorts of illegal shenanigans. He was prosecuted on five separate occasions—once by Rudy Giuliani!—but never received a conviction. His previous cinematic productions included low-art masterpieces *Mausoleum* and *Savage Streets*. But during the shooting of *Knights of the City*, he met a teenage dancer whose Christian faith supposedly inspired him to retire from the mob. Franzese negotiated a plea bargain, arranging for a 10-year sentence and $15 million in restitution. He entered prison, leaving *Knights of the City* unreleased for years before New World Pictures picked it up for distribution. After his release, he devoted himself to Christian evangelism. What a fucking jerk! I think we can all agree he was doing the world a much greater service back when he was producing *Mausoleum*. (*TS*)

KRUSH GROOVE

Dir. Michael Schultz / 1985

THE crucial rap-to-riches tale, based on the founding days of Def Jam Recordings.

Run DMC, Sheila E, Kurtis Blow and The Fat Boys share the screen with a debuting Blair Underwood to tell the melodramatic tale of fictional hit factory Krush Groove Records. The then-burgeoning rap business is painted as an inspiring but tenuous venture between an enormous pool of friends. As success is found, tempers flare and alliances are broken. In one such scene in a bloodless dance club, new wave art trash gyrate to Casio-calypso headachery. Their chic is as tragic as their audio assault; two-tone sidewall mohawks, devil horn pixie 'dos and less-describable fashion crimes line the walls. Sheila E's backup musicians have a similarly faltering grasp on what constitutes an acceptable physical appearance; their severely pastel New Romantic style an affront to everything else presented onscreen. Less offensive is when the Caucasian co-founder of Krush Groove (played by real-life superproducer Rick Rubin) dons a Hüsker Dü T-shirt for the climactic rap battle.

The members of Run DMC do an unexpectedly strong job of carrying the drama, which features early appearances from a scrawny LL Cool J and the Beastie Boys (who get roundly booed by the assembled hip-hop purists). At a particularly charged performance, Adolfo "Shabba-Doo" Quinones of *Breakin'* fame can be seen casting a critical gaze from the front row. Though clearly injected as comic relief, The Fat Boys prove themselves the film's true stars in the epic "All-You-Can-Eat" segment where they rap while laying waste to a Sbarro's pizza buffet. Though the scene is hilarious, nothing in this exceptional film draws more laughs than you'll get when you switch the last three letters of Blair Underwood's first and last names. (*ZC*)

KURT & COURTNEY

Dir. Nick Broomfield / 1998

A damning, conspiracy theory-riddled documentary on Kurt Cobain's death.

The BBC produced this investigative biography on the Nirvana frontman and his arguably wife-assisted spiral into the afterlife. The openly fumbling UK crew starts their search for answers in the singer's hometown of Aberdeen, WA, but the claws come out when their attention shifts to Courtney Love and the various hypotheses surrounding Cobain's demise. Broomfield presents one considered theory that Mentors vocalist El Duce was paid a mere $50,000 by Love to exterminate her husband. After a section of the group's typically offensive "Sex Slave" video is shown, the crew travels to El Duce's Riverside, CA home, where he states point blank to the camera that she attempted to hire him for the job. The legendary "rape-rocker" allegedly passed a polygraph test to this effect, but before he could further establish his claim, he was killed in a mysterious, much-publicized train mishap.

At this point, several journalists are interviewed about how they were physically assaulted by Love, and we're treated to a third-person account about her attacking a writer at the 1995 Academy Awards, using Quentin Tarantino's Oscar as a bludgeon. Her former "friends" seem all too eager to rage against the pop widow-heiress—including her own father—as well as Negative Trend frontman-turned-proto-darkwaver Rozz Rezabek. Throughout the doc, Love's legal threats haunt the production. Even if you consider the concept of Love as a murderer to be far-fetched, it's never a stretch to imagine Evil Incarnate doing something evil. (*ZC*)

LABYRINTH OF PASSION

Dir. Pedro Almodóvar / 1982

Maybe all a nymphomaniac needs is a nice gay boy to straighten her out, or vice versa.

Like all good sex romps, the plot here is questionable, with the story concentrating on two basic deviants. One is Sexilia, a nymphomaniac whose father is a fertility specialist. She picks up three or four men on a good day and takes them all home at once. The other is Riza, a homosexual whore who sneaks around Spain because his family is in exile as the monarchy of Tehran. He hooks up with a very young Antonio Banderas, who turns out to be some sort of Islamic human bloodhound, who is actually on the lookout for Riza so that they can hold him hostage to gain leverage against Tehran. Confused yet?? It turns out that Sexilia has a punk band and they play a show opening for a band called The Them. The best part is Almodovar himself and a gay sidekick performing a sort of disco/rap/new wave/spoken word opening act about all the drugs they take. After all this, the lead singer of The Them is injured and Riza volunteers to take his place, quickly becoming a punk rock sensation known only as "Johnny." The punk testosterone flows right to his balls and makes him see Sexilia as the height of sexual gratification despite the fact that he's only had sex with men his entire life. *(JH)*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE FABULOUS STAINS

Dir. Lou Adler / 1981

A teenage girl's shot at fame changes the world.

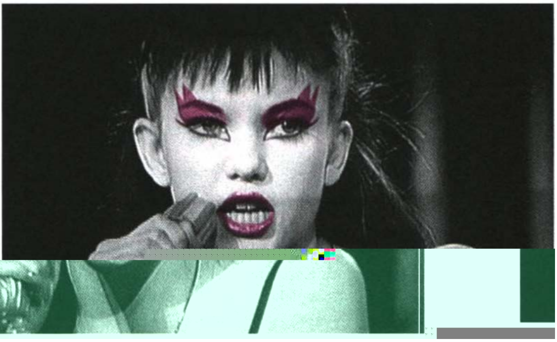
Hollywood's punk awareness was still in its infant stages when Paramount Pictures unveiled one of the great rock 'n' roll tales of the 20th century. Unfortunately, *The Fabulous Stains* was so far ahead of its time that it defied categorization and disappeared immediately, without so much as a home video release.

The Vancouver production was scripted by Oscar-winning screenwriter Nancy Dowd after she attended a particularly inspiring Ramones concert, while director Adler's only previous punk work had been in Cheech and Chong's *Up in Smoke*. To add to the unlikelihood of a masterpiece, the lead role was to be played by a largely unknown 15-year-old. Impossibly, all these factors coalesced into a monumental drama bursting with empowerment, heartbreak and new wave voltage.

Deeply embittered teen Corinne Burns (Diane Lane) catches the nation's attention as part of a news story on the decaying town of Charlestown, PA. The program's crew returns to do a follow-up piece, grilling Corinne about her worldview and recently departed mother. Each question is met with a dry, dismissive swipe, but she opens up a bit to announce that she's shed her former identity. She's now "Third Degree Burns, lead singer and manager of The Stains," a trio completed by her sister Tracy (Marin Kanter) and her cousin Jessica (Laura Dern in her first major screen role). Jessica's mother Linda (Christine Labti) is a hungover chain-smoker who sees no promise in the girls, but Corinne's plans are bigger than anyone could imagine. Wandering by the town's condemned factories, she tells herself, "We're the greatest rock band in the world and we're going to change everything."

Corinne's already-considerable determination is thrown into overdrive when she catches a live set by touring UK punk outfit The Looters. The group consists of four handsome lads (Ray Winstone, The Clash's Paul Simonon and Paul Cook & Steve Jones of the Sex Pistols), whose anti-military anthem "Be a Professional" brings down the house and transfixes her completely. The spell is broken when headlining hard rock dinosaurs The Metal Corpses take the stage, posturing and wheezing every ounce of youthful excitement out of the room. The Looters' lead singer Billy (Winstone) is infuriated by their geezer tourmates, hurling insults from the side of the stage and setting things up for a loooong trip across the country.

The tour's Rastafarian manager/driver Lawnboy (reggae artist Barry Ford) recognizes Corinne from her TV appearances and miraculously invites The Stains along as the opening act. After just three practices, the girls find themselves on a rickety luxury bus full of frowning Brits and comatose, longhaired dads, all of whom ignore the teens entirely. A few hours into the trip, Metal Corpses vocalist Lou (Fee Waybill of The Tubes) antagonizes Billy until a beating breaks out between the bus seats.



At The Stains' debut show, Corinne steps out on stage with supreme confidence and angular eyeshadow. Her terrified bandmates begin plodding through their opener "Waste of Time," an antisocial droner completed by Corinne's flatline vocals. The audience is confused, The Looters whispering jabs at the band from the bar. Tracy is so mortified that she stops playing and the room falls into an uneasy stillness. Suddenly, Corinne removes her beret, exposing a shocking skunk-stripe hair overhaul. Everyone—including her sister and cousin—is astonished, especially when she targets a dismissive female audience member and tears at the woman's insecurities until her date throws a beer at the stage. Rather than shrink away, Corinne removes her drenched overcoat and stands proudly in black pantyhose and a transparent red blouse. Her condemning

As uniquely inspired as Stains was, the project was also cursed. Dowd left the set in anger after being sexually harassed, and ended up being as "Rob Morton." Even before its release, the film faced distribution trouble due to poorly-received test screenings and the studio's reaction to the content. An ill-fitting ending was shot almost two years after initial production had wrapped, the girls distractingly older. Still, the film's overall impact remains untarnished. The few who saw the early screenings planted the seed for a slowly growing fanbase. By the late '90s, it was a sought-after bootleg rarity, partly due to the efforts of filmmaker Sarah Jacobson, who championed the movie in every way possible (including shooting a 10 minute behind-the-scenes documentary on the film's creation). But Jacobson was far from alone in her appreciation of the proto-riot grrrl epic; thousands of Stains fans have claimed it as a driving influence on their music and outlook.

To quote Corinne: "I think every girl should be given an electric guitar on her 16th birthday." (ZC)

LADY TERMINATOR

Dir. Jalil Jackson / 1988

The mystical South Seas Queen possesses a young woman
and goes on a kill-crazy goddamn rampage.

White people were too stupid to notice, but the nations of the South Pacific have provided the world with some of its most neck-snappingly exciting exploitation movies. This isn't a recent development either; Filipino and Indonesian B films have held a firm grip on these nations' entertainment industry since the glory days of Eddie Romero, the bold auteur responsible for the Blood Island trilogy and fistfuls more of the finest cinematic exports. South Seas movies have a unique ability to forego logic and feasibility in a relentless drive to distill maximum entertainment, and in no film has this impressive approach triumphed more wholly than in Lady Terminator.

It's a tale as old as time: after a man steals a snake from a sex witch's vagina, she threatens to exact revenge on his great-great-granddaughter. One hundred years later, a scuba-diving female anthropologist is violated by the same morally corrupt snake, causing her to unleash a wave of shirtless laser-eyed homicide. Her target: a certain great-great-granddaughter, who's also an up-and-coming Benatar-esque Indonesian rock star. But it's hard to stay at the top of the pops when a possessed immortal slaughters your fans by the dozens.

Teenyboppers aren't the only victims here. A punk stares out at the night sky on a secluded beach with "KISS ME" painted on his jacket and a safety pin through his cheek. He grins as he watches his drunken friend urinate for a full two minutes. When a glowering naked woman approaches from nowhere, the punk urges his friend: "Go ahead! You're not going to get AIDS!" Turns out a much quicker death awaits them both, as the Lady Terminator's favorite non-firearm method of execution involves a hearty chomp from her carnivorous privates.

Genital terror is expanded to new dimensions throughout this film. Crotches are riddled with bullets, mangled, eaten and worse. Would you believe this vicious she-demon even pauses to give a gunned-down corpse a kick in the dingle? What a totally cruel supernatural tramp!! (ZC)

LAMB

Dir. Colin Gregg / 1986

A priest (Liam Neeson) kidnaps a child
and doesn't want to have sex with him.

A kid constantly throws himself to the floor and has epileptic seizures. For the most part, this movie is pretty dry, with lots of scenes of walking. Not-so-thrilling moments occur like Neeson and the boy going to the library to look up epilepsy. Added with the backdrop of the gray skies of the United Kingdom, this film makes one's eyelids heavy.

Feel free to laugh out loud when some boisterous queens get the little tyke high on ganja. A pre-Ghost Dad Ian Bannen tests the waters of talent as a strict priest. Neeson is good here but his character's actions, especially toward the end, are very confusing.

Punks are all over a scene at a T-shirt store. U2 plays while a youth with a pink mohawk peruses the selection. Neeson and the little kid get shirts with their faces on them. Too bad all the kid really wanted was a Wham! top. Van Morrison apparently needed to eat, and wrote the smooth sax soundtrack. Instead of his usual co-opting of black music, here he co-opts straight-to-cable synth crap. (BC)

LAND OF DOOM

Dir. Peter Maris / 1986

Yet another goddamn Road Warrior knock-off.

Yep, the world has been reduced to a nuclear wasteland. Yep, rampaging marauders lay further waste to the ruins of civilization. Yep, a small band of rebels fight back against incredible odds. And yep, the villainous fashion of the future includes studded leather and gaudy mohawks. If every similar VHS tape I've bought for this book suddenly turned into gold, I'd be Oprah. (ZC)

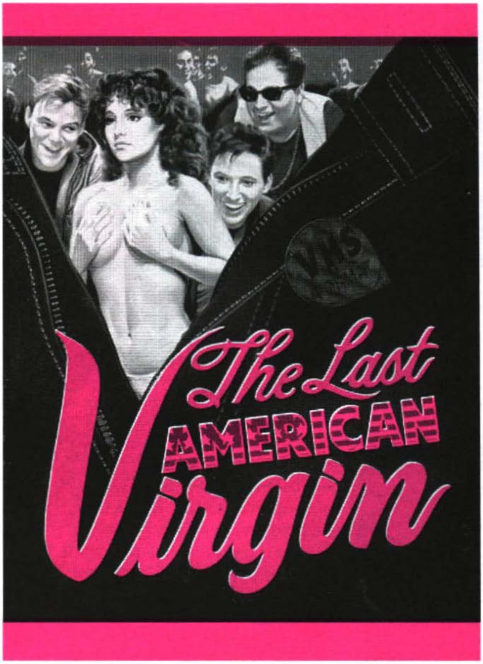
THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN

Dir. Boaz Davidson / 1982

'80s teen comedy struck down by the cold fist of reality.

The most brutally heart-wrenching boner romp to ever hit the screen. Gary (Lawrence Monoson) is a teenage driver for Pink Pizza and, like all red-blooded LA boys, cruises for gooood trouble with equally horn-dogged pals Rick (Steve Antin) and David (Joe Rubbo). When not seducing girls by substituting Sweet'n Low for cocaine, they're measuring the school nerd's immense penis. Suddenly, Gary finds himself head-over-heels for Karen (Diane Franklin), the new girl on campus who hangs out with pixie new waver Rose (Kimmy Robertson). Though Rose is the only culture warrior on serious display throughout the film, there is a moment at a local hot dog stand featuring a trench-coated, mohawked background extra. Also, a Halloween dance party brings the joys of a kid in Devo attire, but great disappointment when Karen goes mouth-to-mouth with Gary's best friend. Music at the party—and throughout the soundtrack—is provided by the top new music acts of the day, including Oingo Boingo, Gleaming Spires and The Waitresses. Strained friendships deteriorate as our moon-eyed hero barely maintains sanity while his dream girl is seduced by Rick. Inevitably, the junior lothario's caddish ways leave Karen needing a shoulder to cry on, and Gary is too quick to offer his, with deeply authentic results.

This enormously underrated high school masterpiece ricochets between goofball rump-chasing and breathtaking, sincere realism. Monoson's lead performance really should have earned the 18-year-old a stronger career, if not a goddamn Oscar. The closing 15 minutes is unquestionably the most pure and powerful in any teen movie, and should be viewed as a cautionary lesson by each tortured soul on the precipice of adulthood. (*ZC*)



KIMMY ROBERTSON

"Rose" – *THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN*

KR: The first time I ever acted was my audition. The second time was on camera on the first day of shooting. They said, "Hit your mark and say your lines." And I was like, what's a mark?

DAM: How did you end up in it?

I was a dancer. The company I was in had an agent, and she worked with others. One of them always said I was funny and I should be an actor. I told her, "I hate actors. All they do is talk in accents and wear patchouli oil." But she bugged me until I had photos made. I only knew one guy in Hollywood...he owed me a favor because I'd helped get people for a video he'd made for Devo. I was a Devo girlfriend. I went out there and met with the guy I knew, I read for the director, and he said he wanted me in the picture.

So you were part of the new wave scene already?

Well, yeah. Definitely. The clothes I wore in the film, the hairdo, the bondage pants, those were all mine. But not that weird space suit...that wasn't mine at all.

THE LAST BUS HOME

Dir. Johnny Gogan / 1997

The struggles of an Irish punk band as they deal with record labels and tumultuous personal relationships.

In 1979, on the day the Pope visits Dublin, young punk Reena is the only person in her small town who hasn't gone to see His Holiness plead for peace. Instead, she stays home listening to Undertones records and tearing her clothes to shreds. As she ventures out into the empty streets, she spots a "band members wanted" sign that lists Joy Division, the Sex Pistols and Crass as influences. The guy who posted it has also steered clear of the Pope, so when Reena finds him they immediately fall in love. She becomes the manager for his band The Dead Patriots, and the film follows them as they book shows, gain fans and sign record deals. The group's sound is very traditional and incorporates elements of Irish rebel music. But they aren't as good as the movie wants you to believe they are, and any performance footage feels grossly inauthentic. Much more entertaining is one of their opening acts, a fat man in a dress singing heartfelt ballads as a little girl repeats the same two chords on a piano. The record label pressures The Dead Patriots to move to London, where they will reach a larger audience, but the singer feels it would be a betrayal of his Irish loyalties, and is also quite comfortable being the biggest band in a small town. Plus he's intensely jealous of Reena, who flirts with the record executive and wants the band to leave Ireland. He's not yet aware that she's been sleeping with the band's drummer, and their jealousies and petty grievances eventually tear the band apart.

At their final show, the singer totally loses his shit and—under the pretext of introducing the other band members—starts cruelly berating them. It devolves into a furious shouting match and the band gives its only good performance in the entire film. An epilogue shows the singer many years later, now the owner of the punk club they used to play at. This is supposed to seem triumphant, but the club is gentrified and blares abhorrent house music until a horrendous adult contemporary band takes the stage and gargles out some despicable smooth crooning. The film excels in its attention to period detail, recreating a totally plausible representation of the Irish punk scene in the early '80s, but the decision to focus on the melodramatic relationships among the egotistical musicians leaves the story dull and uninvolving. (*TS*)

THE LAST DRAGON

Dir. Michael Schultz / 1985

When Eddie Arcadian and Sho'nuff team up to take over the Seventh Heaven club, it's up to martial arts master-in-training Leroy Green to stop them.

Produced by Motown Records founder Berry Gordy, this film is the genre-mixing gem of the '80s, combining elements of blaxploitation, kung fu and musicals. Taimak plays the naïve but strong-hearted Leroy Green. He's so obsessed with Bruce Lee and Chinese culture that he eats popcorn with chopsticks. This behavior troubles Leroy's father, who owns a pizza parlor that sports the slogan "Just directa your feetza to Daddy Green's Pizza." Pop chanteuse Vanity plays the owner of Seventh Heaven and pulls out some serious voguing in one of the film's better dance sequences. Later on, she gets Leroy alone at the club and tries to seduce him, but he's too distracted by the giant movie screen showing Bruce Lee clips. Villain Arcadian's main squeeze is a bubbly she-goof who does a video wearing new wave glasses, yellow spandex with headlights over her boobs and a license plate covering her butt. She has a blue dollop on her hair and sings about "test drives" and "free rides." The film probably got the "13" added to its PG right about here. This might be the first movie to have homie-talking Asians. Actually, this might also be the first movie to feature an overweight Caucasian Mr. T. impersonator. Nothing here comes off as copycat filmmaking, but rather as a fun-loving homage and reworking of the kung fu classics of the '70s. Look for William H. Macy as a small pleading man. (*BC*)

THE LAST OF ENGLAND

Dir. Derek Jarman / 1988

Fleeting visions + dramatized anguish = 0.

Post-WWII family films are interspersed with footage of half-naked street kids grinding against religious effigies. A young mohawked derelict is menaced by police. When a greaser junkie begins tootling on a pan flute, you'll actually feel your heart wither.

But in all fairness, Jarman's senses-dulling, plotless exploration of washed-out memories achieves an incredible feat: consider the fact that film runs at 24 frames per second. *The Last of England* clocks in at one hour and 26 minutes, totaling 123,840 individual onscreen images. Impossibly enough, not one of them is interesting. I would rather watch a coupon for a week than an instant of this art-flavored strike against entertainment. (*ZC*)

LAST OF THE WARRIORS

aka EMPIRE OF ASH III

Dirs. Michael Mazo & Lloyd A. Simandl / 1989

Oppressed warriors grit their teeth in underground bunkers.

In a war-torn future, an evil tyrant (William Smith) works to destroy all resisting outposts of humanity. His lackeys are feral, bloodthirsty

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THE LAST POGO

Dirs. Colin Brunton & Patrick Lee / 1979

Five hundred miles from New York City, '70s punk was flourishing in Toronto, Ontario.

By '79, Gary Cormier and Gary Topp—better known as The Garys—had been booking underappreciated shows for years, bringing in acts like the Ramones long before people knew what to make of them. Their primary venue was The Horseshoe Tavern, which (largely through their efforts) was known as Toronto's CBGB. As Eastern Canada's scene reached its apex, The Garys staged the epic concert The Last Pogo. Punk shorts filmmaker Brunton was present with camera in hand, interviewing the bands backstage and members of the packed house. In his striking documentary, each act of the night is chronologically represented with a single song, kicking off with The Scenics, Cardboard Brains, The Secrets, The Mods and The Ugly. By the time party-rousers The Viletones take the stage, the audience is liver-damaged and local police have decided that the show can't go on. Show-closers Teenage Head barely get through their first number before the concert transforms into a lazy, alcohol-impacted riot. Emergency vehicles are called in and the crowd is dumped out onto the street, capping off a major chapter in Canada's punk rock legacy. (ZC)

THE LEGEND OF BILLIE JEAN

Dir. Matthew Robbins / 1985

A misunderstanding makes a young girl the hero of thousands.

Billie Jean Davy (*Supergirl*'s Helen Slater) is a gold-hearted teen resident of Corpus Christi, Texas. Her best friend is her scrappy kid brother Binx (Christian Slater in his film debut). When a group of older bullies destroy Binx's beloved scooter, Billie Jean takes it upon herself to make things right and ends up having to skip town on a weapons charge. On the lam with her brother and friends (including character/voice actress Yeardley Smith in her best role), Billie Jean unknowingly begins to achieve outlaw hero status. By the time they encounter lonely outcast tech nerd Lloyd (Keith Gordon), she's a local legend...and word is still spreading.

The group hides out at Lloyd's dad's mansion and discusses their situation as a Plasmatics video plays in the background. Later, Billie Jean experiences a revelation while watching Preminger's Joan of Arc biopic *Saint Joan*. Realizing the unlikely importance of her accidental mission, she cuts her hair short like the film's lead Jean Seberg and steps out to address her crew. With Lloyd's help, Billie Jean sends out messages to the media that explain her situation, always ending with her adopted mantra, "Fair is fair." As these video statements spread, Billie Jean becomes an iconic force throughout the U.S.; teenage girls begin aping her military/new wave hairstyle and wetsuit wardrobe in an effort to channel Billie Jean's power and resolve.

Supporting roles from a sympathetic Peter Coyote and Dean Stockwell are well played, but nothing that distracts from the intensity of the kids' quest. Blindly jaded modern viewers may scoff at the dated mall fashions and Pat Benatar theme, but let them be wrong. Though the specific reasons are difficult to pinpoint, something about *The Legend of Billie Jean* is so desperately sincere that it ceases to be a mid-'80s major studio teen film and becomes an inadvertent proto-feminist masterpiece. (ZC)

THE LEGEND OF SPEED

Dir. Wai-keung Lou / 1999

A downgraded Hong Kong predecessor to *The Fast and the Furious* that pits a fashionable racing-obsessed schmuck against various opponents.

Underdressed women and nighttime sunglasses replace plot and substance just in time for a tragic new millennium of action films. The too-smooth protagonist is addicted to racing in all forms, be it on four wheels, two or even on a Pole Position arcade game vs. a ridiculous mall punk. In that same scene, a handful of pathetic mohawked ravers wiggle and bump on the Dance Dance Revolution machine, proving once again that punk's 1990s death rattle could be heard from every corner of the world. (ZC)

LEGEND OF THE ROLLER BLADE SEVEN

Dir. Donald G. Jackson / 1992

Roller-skating women in bikinis battle blackhearted desert villains.

The final entry in Jackson's *Roller Blade* mythos, and buried deep in the declined quality of his phase with late-era collaborator Scott Shaw, this movie is largely a combination of footage from 1991's *The Roller Blade Seven* and the following year's *Return of the Roller Blade Seven*. I'm opting to not cover each film individually as the core of both is represented in this feature. Also, any viewer would vomit out of their eyeballs if they attempted to sit through the entire series.

Legend is heavily narrated and heart-stoppingly disjointed, even by the standards set in the previous films (see *Roller Blade* for the ground floor of this magnum quintology). Here, Jackson himself appears as Father Donaldo, who sends Hawk (a very wooden Shaw) on a mission into the deadly Wheel Zone to retrieve kidnapped roller nun Sister Sparrow. Hawk is first seen in a Jacuzzi,

fully dressed in a black suit and enjoying the company of two bikini-clad women. Entering the

pair finds common ground through violence and sitcom humor, but not before lobbing plenty of schoolyard insults.

Within the framework of the buddy cop genre exists a resolute nihilism (this is especially true of Dfirg Pfffllll(.tfi humans exist as vehicles for violence and misanthropy. There is no gray area; the characters are either targets or shooters. A attempt is made to lighten things up with the limp male bonding-fueled humor a ever-present sexy sax soundtrack, but don't be fooled. Dfirg Pfffllll'tfi is a pre-packaged product, designed to engage all the pleasure centers of the brain with its vomitorium of carnage.

The plot involves a flimsy mystery with Some Foreign Guy and Some Military Guy (Gary Busey in a fine performance) that exists merely as a clothesline for the cantankerous Murtaugh (Danny Glover) to butt heads with wild man Riggs (Mel Gibson). Through a series of disjointed episodes of gunplay and broken bodies, Riggs is able to find redemption and resolution through cartoon violence. Murtaugh is the adoptive father figure to Riggs' little lost boy, tough but loving. The single-track, full-speed-ahead method Efirg Pfffllll'tfi employs begins to sputter and stall near the end, and the saturation of chaos yields to a monotone flatness. One of the strangest aspects of all the vulgarity and tossed-off profanity is Mel Gibson's seemingly improvised homophobia. Gibson refers t the possibility of two women in bed together as "disgusting," and later on he calls Glover a "fag" as he attempts to put out a fire on his back. I'd like to see the script to confirm my suspicions that thexio sleekethe

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too-wide bleached buzz more reminiscent of The Boz than a street warrior. But once they break up the group, Patti joins metal masters The Hunzz and is inducted into a more rugged crowd of wasteoids that includes a couple of punk headbangers. Decidedly *un*-punk celebrity Trent Reznor appears on stage in comedically limp synth band The Problems.

Fox's role was originally written for Bruce Springsteen, who later passed on the part but was still kind enough to provide the film's opening theme. Schrader's directorial style is difficult to discern through this working-class bar rock custody battle, but Jett's surprisingly believable performance is the glue that holds the dysfunction together. That and the scene of Michael J. Fox naked with a 5-year-old boy in a bathtub. (*ZC*)

LINNEA QUIGLEY'S HORROR WORKOUT

Dir. Kenneth J. Hall / 1990

The great '80s scream queen shows Jane Fonda how it's done.

This tape begins with Quigley in the shower soaping up her breasts. It soon cuts to her in front of a cozy fire, reminiscing about a career in exploitation film. We're shown clips from *Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama*, *Creepozoids*, *Assault of the Party Nerds* and—of course—*Return of the Living Dead* featuring her iconic punk character Trash. Then, the workout begins. Her moves are more burlesque than athletic, and she never fully explains what she is doing. On sit-ups: "Do as many as you can before you throw up." She jogs through a graveyard and runs into zombies. Quigley tells the ghouls that they look flabby, so they dance with her for 15 minutes in front of a swimming pool. The last segment is at a slumber party where Quigley and her friends watch horror movies and exercise in lingerie before they're all murdered by an unseen killer. Genuinely entertaining, and the only video to promote exercising in fishnet stockings, boots and a studded metal bra. (*BC*)

THE LION, THE LEOPARD AND THE WOLF

aka BLOODLUST

Dir. Jon Hewitt & Richard Wolstencroft / 1992

Gun-toting party vampires invade
Australia's industrial nightclubs.

A tirelessly sleazy, bloodsucking criminal fantasy. Cops and religious vindicators are too busy swearing and hamming to stop the supernatural massacre. One creatively-shorn industrial punk falls victim to the undead inhumanoids in an alley before he's staked by Christian crusaders. Later, three vamps invade the police station and ventilate everyone in a shot-on-video bloodspray meltdown. Co-director Hewitt would go on to direct much stronger horror work, including 2008's *Acolytes*. (*ZC*)

LIQUID SKY

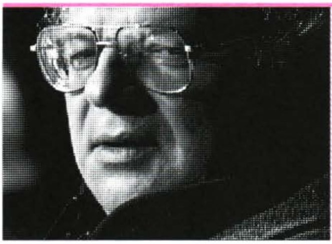
Dir. Slava Tsukerman / 1982

A laser-powered sci-fi assault on the
New York high fashion community.

The most fluorescent, chain-smoking, facepainted, boop-beep-boop alien invasion in cinematic history. Zoned out nightclub prisoners Margaret and Jimmy (both brilliantly played by Anne Carlisle, who also co-wrote the script) are celebrated fashion geniuses, pumping out drug-inspired geometric neon designs for the faux-cyborg set. When not indulging in catwalk theatrics, Margaret hits the dance floor, where other nightlifers show off their choreographed knee bends.

Meanwhile, a miniature alien ship descends on the city, keeping a watchful eye over our species' mating and drug rituals. At the same time, a mysterious European appears with a surplus of information on the interstellar visitor. He states that the creature has often been drawn to areas with a great deal of heroin (which the film's title is a reference to), most of these cities being bastions of punk culture. The alien employs a crystal shard to the skull to kill junkies at the height of orgasm, and has become addicted to the brain fluid it drains in that moment. Margaret's high-traffic apartment serves as a feast for the spacebeast, and the European UFO-logist sets his short-range telescope on the mentally deteriorating new wave maven to watch everyone she sleeps with evaporate.

The film played in its limited engagements for up to three years upon its initial release, word of mouth drawing curiosity seekers of all stripes. Russian emigrant Tsukerman's jarring, black-lit nightmare is a good-natured indictment of New York's nihilistic post-disco art scene, but clearly one made from the inside. Each character is tragically empty, every shot composed for maximum gaudiness. The discordant electronic soundtrack (performed partly by the director) completes this migraine-inducing masterpiece perfectly. (*ZC*)



SLAVA TSUKERMAN

Director – *LIQUID SKY*

ST: When I left Russia and came to the U.S., I planned on making my first picture within the first four or five years. In this time, I wrote a script, "Sweet Sixteen," which was a science-fiction story in the new wave style. I was impressed with Andy Warhol, and he'd even agreed to play a part, but I never got money to make the film. But I had done casting, and in that time I met a lot of people including Anne Carlisle and most of the cast of *Liquid Sky*. We became friends. They paid attention to the fact that the script was very much new wave. For me it was a discovery. When I was writing the script I wasn't yet part of those circles.

When this project didn't happen, I felt that I should still do something with the actors that I'd met. We had become close and we decided to work together. I tried to find an idea that would incorporate all these people, and that's what led to *Liquid Sky*. Another reason was that I wanted to make a movie with special effects. My friend Yuri Neyman had just moved from Russia. He was a very good director of photography, but he was also a special effects master. I also loved special effects and in all my previous films made them myself. I thought that it'd be good to make a low-budget film with many special effects, because it just really hadn't been done this way before.

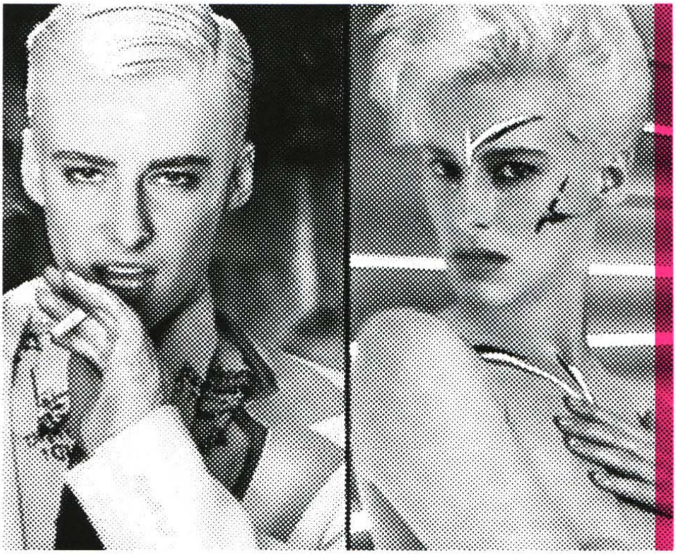
That was a technical reason to make the film. But there were a lot of artistic reasons. I loved the work of Warhol as a painter and a filmmaker, but his films were so experimental.

I thought one could make a film like that but more audience-oriented, mixing in modern legends like drugs and sex, outer space...women's liberation. I tried to incorporate in the plot all the myths of our civilization.

DAM: Was it always intended that Anne Carlisle would play both lead characters, Jimmy and Margaret?

No. Every person in the script was written for a specific person that we wanted to use in the film. The characters in the script were based on the characters of these real people, but the person who was supposed to play the character of Jimmy was shocked by the script. He couldn't see himself in the part and declined to play it. So at that moment, I already had the idea in my mind that Anne could play a male part as well. The name "Jimmy" even came from her childhood. For some reason, her mother would dress her as a little boy and call her Jimmy. She already had two daughters and never had a son. So that really was Anne's second childhood name.

I thought that was very much in line with the script. Androgyny was part of that whole scene. When I first proposed the idea, we dressed Anne as a boy and went out to a nightclub, and no one recognized that she was a girl.



The look of the film is really incredible—

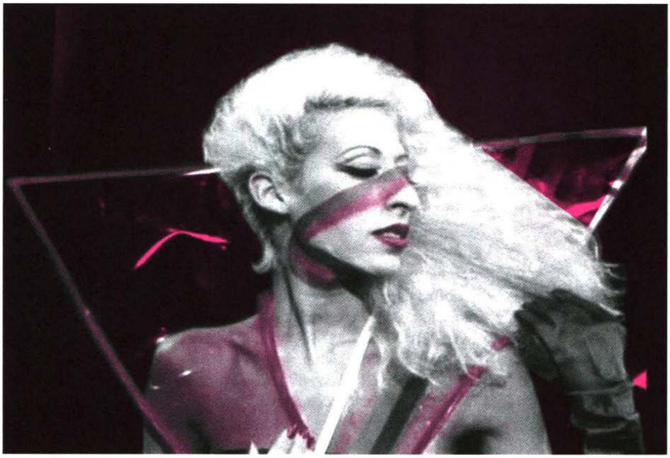
It was intended. We made a lot of research and experiments, introduced fluorescent makeup, new kinds of psychedelic effects...Tried to create new fashion. I remember talking to the designer Marina Levikova about how it'd be amazing if the look of our costumes caught on. And then three or four years later, I was passing Bloomingdales and I looked in the window. There was a display of fashions that were very close to what we did in *Liquid Sky*.

So the film had an impact of fashion in New York?

Absolutely, absolutely. It influenced the fashion there, and other places. Years later, I was talking to a Japanese distributor, and he told me that *Liquid Sky* influenced a generation there, more than anything else. I didn't understand. I asked, "How do you mean?" Here is one of examples he gave me: before *Liquid Sky*, no one in Japan ever shared apartments like they did in the film. I couldn't believe him.

How about the electronic music score? You were involved in that?

I tried to find a composer for this film for a long time. I wanted it to sound almost like a Fellini film, like circus music but electronic. This was before computerized scores. People were using synthesizers, but trying to make it sound like a big symphonic orchestra. They couldn't understand that I was trying to get this primitive sound...they were fighting this primitiveness. I still have demo tapes from all the New York electronic musicians from that time. I spoke with a lot of them, and none of them wanted to do what I wanted. Then, I heard there had just been a new machine created called the Firelight Computer Musical Instrument. I found out that there were two young composers in New York that were authorized by the constructors of the computer to instruct people how to use it. I ended up writing the music myself together with these composers, Brenda Hutchinson and Clive Smith. I think it was the first computer-generated music score in the history of film.



Was the film intended to partly be a criticism of the art scene?

I don't think I criticized anyone. Though some critics wrote that the film is satire. But the satiric ironic intonation was part of the style. Criticism of the scene was not intended...criticism of our entire civilization *was* intended.

LITTLE MONSTERS

Dir. Richard Greenberg / 1989

An adolescent boy enters a world of goofball beasts.

This pre-*Monsters, Inc*. venture into a monster-populated alternate Earth features Fred Savage and Daniel Stern as father and son, which instantly creates its own otherworldly vortex as both actors played the lead character of Kevin Arnold—albeit at different ages—on TV series *The Wonder Years*. Here, Savage plays Brian, a displaced middle-schooler who cunningly traps spastic blue-skinned boogeyman Maurice (Howie Mandel) in the real world. Captive, he agrees to take Brian on a tour of the monsters' reality, where impossible creatures engage in pinball tournaments and eat nonstop pizza buffets. The pair then embarks on Maurice's nightly rounds of kid-spooking. They even stop off at fat bully Ronnie's house to pee in his apple juice, leading to a memorable school lunch moment: "Whoa! He spit piss on the principal!"

Eventually, some low-impact conflict rolls around, but the film primarily remains a showcase for Howie Mandel's unendurable Beetlejuice impersonation, particularly brazen when he directly lifts three jokes straight from Michael Keaton's trick bag. For a family film, *Little Monsters* is refreshingly rich with profanity, body fluid humor and marital discord. It features creative creature makeup effects and sets that look like a sugar-buzzed version of the architecture from 1980's *Popeye* movie, but doesn't quite achieve the era's crazed kids magic of *The Monster Squad* or even *Harry and the Hendersons*.

Though I was hesitant to consider him "punk" at first, Maurice's periwinkle mohawk, dangling skeleton earring, pin-adorned leather jacket and skull backpatch earned his inclusion in this book...especially after he reveals that his mission in life is "total, 100%, unadulterated Where's-the-Beef ANARCHY!!" (ZC)

LIVING DEAD IN TOKYO BAY

aka BATTLE GIRL

Dir. Kazuo "Gaira" Komizu / 1992

Hyperkinetic bullet-blasting skull-splitting nothingness.

A meteor lands off the Japanese coast. Military forces are dispatched to contain a radiation outbreak that causes all affected to transform into flesh-eating maniacs. Tokyo shuts down entirely, leaving its denizens to loot and murder to survive. A busload of reveling teens with colored hair traverses the highways, armed to the teeth and blasting punk cassettes. The government calls in Battle Girl, a heavily-outfitted firearm warrior trained to decapitate a zombie in one second flat. She later breaks out on her own and is pursued by four mutant experiments. In a storm of creature eradication, she allies with the gunrunning punks for a final showdown against the monsters and a nationalist military faction. As you might have gathered, this 70-minute epic is laid out like a video game, only with poorer dramatic flow. From the director of the *Guts of a Virgin* series. (ZC)

LOOK WHO'S TALKING TOO

Dir. Amy Heckerling / 1990

More babbling squirts.

To satisfy the public's seemingly insatiable demand for talking-baby movies, director Heckerling followed up her 1989 hit with this hurried sequel that reteamed John Travolta, Kirstie Alley and Bruce Willis as the voice of toddler Mikey. Yes, that magic is back, though now the family is joined by newborn Julie (voiced by Roseanne Barr) and lovably scummy Uncle Stuart (Elias Koteas). There are some moments that bust through the bickering and whining to differentiate this installment from the first: Travolta does a Pee-wee Herman impression; Mikey dreams about beating up a punk baby in a leather jacket. He also hallucinates that a tiny skinless red demon turns his teddy bear into a carnivorous beast, though the embryo puppet with Roseanne Barr's voice in the film's opening is infinitely more terrifying. Later, Mikey is so horrified by potty training that he visualizes the toilet as a giant fanged monster spitting blue liquid. It rolls its eyes at him and growls, "Hey you! I'm talking to you! Hey, you're supposed to give me some pee-pee! Where's that pee-pee? We're talkin' about pee-pee here! I need that peee-peeeee!!!" This is one of the five best moments in movie history. If watching the film with your children, mind the gratuitous infant ass-washing shot. The amazing Gilbert Gottfried has a cameo as an instructor at the baby gym.

Mel Brooks was the toilet. (ZC)

LOOSE CANNONS

Dir. Bob Clark / 1990

Two goofball officers must overcome their differences
to save a fat man from Nazi extermination.

Stern (Gene Hackman) is a slob cop who lives in his car, and Fielding (Dan Aykroyd) is an investigator with multiple personality disorder. Oh, what a wildly unlikely duo! Harry "The Hippo" (Dom DeLuise) is an international porno merchant who's on the lam from a German psychopath because of a stolen film featuring Hitler engaged in intercourse with two male Nazis. Upon chasing Harry into an S&M club, our mismatched protagonists are witness to a future-shock new wave dance routine featuring silver-skinned, mohawked robotic sexapoids. A brawl breaks out between police and leather daddies, which is broken up when Fielding loses control and lapses into a deeply mortifying Cowardly Lion impersonation. Aykroyd defiles the film with countless other apings from *Wizard of Oz*, *Star Trek* and worse, and even knocks down a gaggle of terrorists while doing a vile Road Runner impression. It's hard to believe this movie is a product of visionary author Richard Matheson (*I Am Legend*, *The Twilight Zone*) and the late, great Bob Clark. The worst output from everyone involved. And DeLuise was in *Silence of the Hams*, for chrissakes. (ZC)

LOOSE SCREWS

Dir. Rafal Zielinski / 1985

Four young men try to get laaaaaaaaaaaaaid.

Porky's rip-off with tons o' nudity. In the first 20 seconds: breasts. In fact, boobs are a major factor in every single scene. The main characters do whatever it takes to catch girls buck naked. The fat one spies on ladies in the shower. The nerd invents a liquid that can melt girls' clothes. One goes in Asian-face and pretends to be a masseuse. Another puts on a purple wig, new wave sunglasses and a paint-spattered shirt to sneak into a school assembly. He and his buds liven up the proceedings by showing off naked women and playing rock music together in white suits. With characters named Principal Hardbutt, Hugh G. Rection and Tracy Gratehead, how could you not be charmed by this film? Oh yeah...because it's not funny. *(BC)*

LORDS OF MAGICK

Dir. David Marsh / 1989

Two hapless sibling sorcerers have a wild time in LA.

986 A.D. An evil wizard named Salatin attacks a princess and blasts her lady-in-waiting with a digital beam that removes her eyeballs. Later, "charmingly roguish" magicians Ulric and Michael are charged with the crime, but escape decapitation by reasoning with the king. He sends them to face Salatin, who appears when the would-be heroes pee on his dark throne. The boys call on Merlin for assistance, and though he appears in the form of a dwarf, he summons enough power to send them one thousand years forward into modern-day Hollywood to save the princess. They marvel at the "castles" (tall buildings) and are mistaken for rapists. A skinhead and a schmoe with a curly mohawk look on as police arrest the magicians for their medieval mischief. The brothers escape, get depressed by heavy metal and fight a gauntlet of street thugs that Salatin has transformed into sword-wielding zombies. Look closely and vomit: one of them is played by Ron Jeremy. Endless video-lightning effects and renaissance slang make this a rugged ride, especially when wacky calliope music plays while Ulric jousts a toilet with a plunger. He then has sex with a prostitute. *(ZC)*

THE LOST BOYS

Dir. Joel Schumacher / 1987

A major studio bloodride through teen immortality.

Jason Patric and both Coreys square off against the hard rocking undead in Schumacher's directorial masterpiece. Arizona natives Michael (Patric) and kid brother Sam (Haim) have relocated to Santa Carla, "the murder capital of the world." Unsettled by California culture, the boys gawk at a staggering number of punk passers-by too numerous to detail here. But I will anyway: a mohawked thug glowers in the shade of a tree; maroon-haired demigoths chat on the boardwalk; an Egyptian-eyed jet black kewpie stares into nothingness; green-haired surf trash smoke curbside; Madonna-ized wavers sneer at the perfect weather; shaggy dumpster divers grin at their moldy treasures; a liberty-spiked adolescent indulges in midway gaming; a blazing red mohawk turns to follow a swimsuited rump; facepainted night creatures revel in the daylight; and punk skulls are airbrushed on leather jackets by waterfront kiosk artists.

All of these outsiders grace the screen before the opening credits have ended, but none of them make their way to the genuinely scorching sax rock concert held that night on the beach. The baby-oiled onstage entertainer is Timmy Cappello, a wailing, spandexed superhuman performing unparalleled anthem "I Still Believe" for the crowd of rapt teens. During the set, Michael locks eyes with Star (Jami Gertz), a haunting drifter who introduces him to the wide world of vampirism. Michael's supernatural education includes the mass slaughter of punks partying around a bonfire. Their blood-blasting demises are rendered less tragic by the fact that their boombox blares Aerosmith's rap track "Walk This Way." Michael eventually turns against his carnivorous would-be colleagues with the help of monster hunters The Frog Brothers (Corey Feldman and Jamison Newlander), his harried mother (Dianne Wiest) and the most endearing, two-fisted grandpa in Santa Carla, perfectly played by Barnard Hughes. Though neither as graceful or intelligent as 1987's other white trash youth vampire epic *Near Dark*, *The Lost Boys* is a deeply satisfying ode to flesh-ripping, maggot-eating, feel-good violence. *(ZC)*

LOU REED: ROCK N ROLL HEART

Dir. Timothy Greenfield-Sanders / 1998

A biography of the music pioneer.

This one's by the book: Interview...Cut to footage...A lot of car waxing. They talk to Jim Carroll, members of The Velvet Underground, Patti Smith and David Bowie, who displays a futuristic soul patch. We see photos of ol' CBGB and a few of the seminal punk bands that played there: the Dead Boys, the Ramones and more. It's a testament to Reed's talent as an artist that they include opinions on his later, less-regarded work. Usually movies like this stop the conversation after the "good stuff" is covered because most entertainers' later output is forgetful and lazy. But this film shows that Reed kept experimenting all the way into the '90s. Excluded is any coverage of his hilariously cool appearance in the masterfully wacky *Get Crazy* (1983). The best part here—and what I wish the whole movie was—is footage of Reed eating pizza and playing an arcade game. *(BC)*

LOUDER FASTER SHORTER

Dir. Mindougis Bogdon / 1978

A frenetic, beautifully shot sampling
of early San Francisco punk rock.

This "magafilm" offshoot of venerable punk mag *Search and Destroy* covered a handful of the Bay Area's finest acts. Grim drone punks UXA menace the hesitant crowd with "Death from Above," and by the time the Avengers take the stage, the crowd is riled and raging appropriately to Penelope Houston's unblinking presence. The Sleepers are next, followed by the triple vocal assault of The Mutants. The Dils hold up against the competition with a rousing version of "Citizen."

All footage was taken from a two-day Mabuhay Gardens show called Punk Against Black Lung. The 14-band event was set up by 415 Records founder Howie Klein and The Dils' Tony Kinman to benefit striking coal miners. Experimental filmmaker Bruce Conner was among the camera crew, all of whom manage to translate the power of the documented acts to film. Though *Louder Faster Shorter* is criminally short—featuring only five of the show's 14 bands—few other concert films are this well constructed. This release from the mighty Target Video captures the power of California punk's fearless fledgling phase. (*ZC*)

LOVE BITES

Dir. Marvin Jones / 1988

The best shot-on-video gay vampire comedy of 1988.

Jake is a young urban vampire hunter whose crusade against the undead has spoiled his sex life. He plans an attack on Hollywood count Damian, but accidentally falls in love with the dapper creature instead. Thus begins a camcorder epic of man/manster romance, instilled with effective humor and drama despite the film's porn-caliber production values.

Jake's reluctant sidekick Leslie is a half-naked, hilarious Southern he-belle who goes head-over-heels for Damian's worm-eating manservant Manfield. The two decide to start a rock group called Manny & the Manhandlers, and celebrate their plan by donning Hawaiian shirts, thong underwear and outrageous new wave hairstyles. Leslie paws his razor-sharp mohawk and asks, "Is it too trendy?...Too Melrose?" The film's rousing score is credited to the Transylvania Pops Orchestra. (*ZC*)

LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR

Dir. Dave Markey / 1986

LA's greatest nonexistent rock band reclaims its throne.

After the break-even breakout success of *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, We Got Power Films (director Markey and the Schwartz siblings) again stoked the flames of punk legend with this chaotic, high-concept sequel. Kitty (Jennifer Schwartz), now a squalid wino, is reunited with Patch Kelly (Janet Housden), who now goes by "Patch Christ" and rules a legion of fanatical followers. The pair decides to replace dead guitarist Bunny Tremelo and reform The Lovedolls, rescuing their friend Alexandria (Kim Pilkington) from a life of prostitution so she can fill axe duties. Jordan Schwartz appears as her spurned pimp.

Their reunion excites fans and ignites trouble. Murdered rock promoter Johnny Tramaine (Steve McDonald) has a twin brother Rainbow (also Steve McDonald), who leaves the safety of his desert hippie commune to travel to the city. A vision of Kitty appears to Lovedolls-obsessed loner Carl Celery (Jeff McDonald). She hands him a gun and demands that he kill Bruce Springsteen. The mother of Lovedolls victim Tanya Hearst also rolls into town to exact revenge. Through it all, the girls write new songs and lead their violently dedicated disciples through the city. When their former label owner refuses to make them stars again, he's speared, disemboweled and mildly cannibalized. As humanity evaporates, one character refers to LA as "the land of pigs and whores."

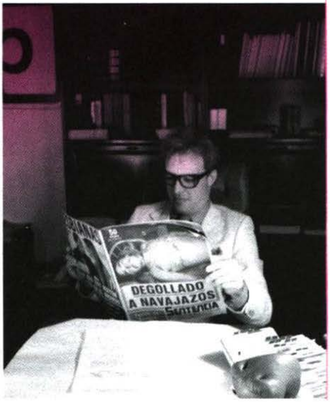
All paths eventually converge in waves of homicide, vengeance and unexpected alliances. Carl is bitten by a Gene Simmons action figure, assumes the God of Thunder's appearance and successfully carries out the Springsteen execution: "Who's the boss *NOW*, motherfucker?!!" Furious over his brother's death, Rainbow cuts his long hair, dons a White Flag tank top and instantly transforms into a Santa Monica punk named "Bacteria Warfare." After his pathetic knife attack on Alexandria, The Lovedolls convince him to front their manufactured all-male opening act Anarchy 6. The group is a hit with their anthem "Slam. Spit. Cut Your Hair. Kill Your Mom," and the new incarnation of The Lovedolls sends the adoring crowd into overdriven insanity. They sell out a 55,000-seat venue and the President of the United States (Jello Biafra) calls to confirm that everything is set for their intergalactic tour. After dispatching their followers in a Jonestown-style mass slaughter, they blast off to rock the outer reaches of the universe.

Clearly, the second and final *Lovedolls* film is impossibly ambitious, but it pays off solidly on all fronts. There's an increased confidence from the actors and filmmaker, and the careening plotline certainly never drags. Similar to Nick Zedd's New York trash masterpiece *They Eat Scum*, but greatly shaped by the Southern California environment. Besides Biafra, many familiar faces pop up from the punk community: Black Flag's Chuck Dukowski plays it straight as a NASA guard, and actual punk cop Bill "Pat Fear" Bartell of White Flag appears in full uniform. Other small parts are played by past and future members of Nip Drivers, Celebrity Skin, L7, The Simpletones and The Bangles. There's even cameos from Black Flag's van and Lucille Ball's house! The soundtrack is provided by Sonic Youth, Meat Puppets, the Dead Kennedys and (of course) Redd Kross, who also penned songs for The Lovedolls and Anarchy 6. (*ZC*)

JENNIFER SCHWARTZ

Writer / "Kitty Carryall" – *LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR*

JS: We started working on *Lovedolls Superstar* immediately after *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*. It was easy to get people for this one. Janet was in right away; she wanted to write. We decided to really pick it up, and even got Jello Biafra. It's not like he was hanging out with us, or anything. I think the first one just got so much attention, and all of a sudden we've got people we don't even know personally that want to be in it. I have no idea how that happened, but when I was told that Jello was going to play the president of the United States, I said OK. It had Vicki Peterson from The Bangles in it...all kinds of people. And they would actually show up on time, we had extras, it was unbelievable. We did a scene in Century City where we had 20 or 30 people show up on a weekend for free, no food, for the whole day.

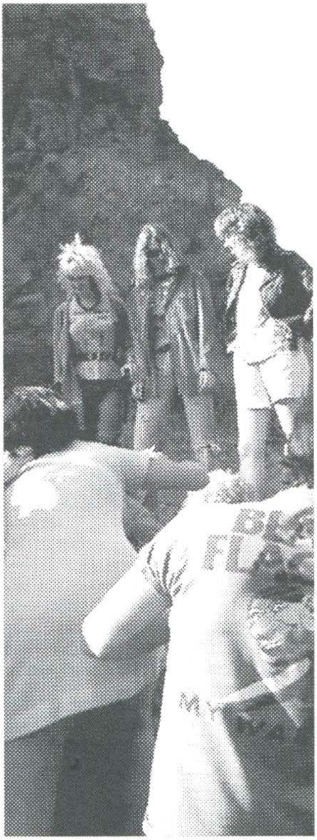


DAM: It must have been unreal to have this actually turning into something...

Oh, yeah! When I first got recognized on the street as Kitty, it was like, "What?! How do you even know about that?" I was so freaked out. But over the years, I'd be in the most random places and someone would just ask if I was "the girl from that movie." Or they'd say the "Thanks for killing my mom" line. This went on for years. Of course, now no one would recognize me. But not that long ago, Marilyn Manson of all people sampled my voice saying, "Thanks for killing my mom" on some recording he made.

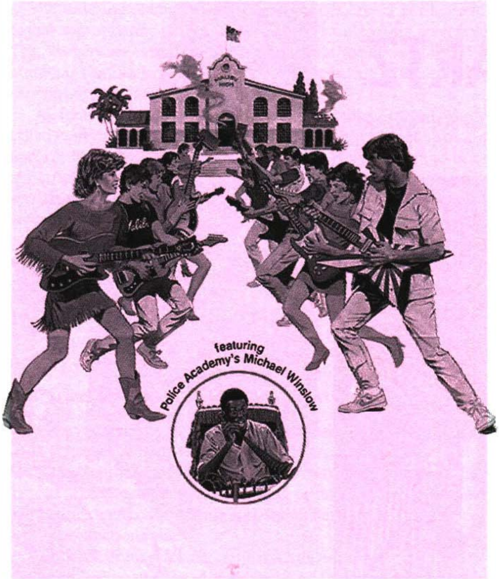
The second film takes a lot more jabs, just making fun of stereotypes. Anarchy 6 in particular are pretty great.

The hardcore band Anarchy 6 were made up expressly for the movie. Dave and Jordan were big hardcore bands and they thought that was such a hoot, the McDonald brothers making fun of hardcore. It was already starting to wane at that time and get really ridiculous. A lot of the hardcore bands were going metal. So that was really funny. They ended up doing albums and they played a couple of gigs.



And there's a major swipe at "The Boss."

We targeted Bruce Springsteen because that was at the height of his popularity, and it was hell living through that. Anyone that was alive then has to remember. He ruled the world and it was horrible. I hated him. I despised Bruce Springsteen. Everybody did. That fuckin' America bullshit...fuck! This was a time when there was a lot to rally against, and I considered Bruce Springsteen public enemy number one. I still hate him.



LOVELINES

Dir. Rodney Amateau / 1984

Antics abound at a nearly-wild talent contest.

Michael "the sound effects guy from *Police Academy*" Winslow stars in this forcibly zany '80s high school gooftrash as a wily, sound effects-slingin' rock promoter staging the ultimate suburban Battle of the Bands. The first group to compete is flawlessly false punk. The bassist/singer shakes his red-dyed curls and plaid-clad ass at the drummer (*RoboCop's* Miguel Ferrer), who sports an equally laughable blue-striped hairdo and anarchy tank top. To balance out this affront against genuine anti-fashion, the guitarist looks like a 19th-century gold prospector. An imposing audience member bobs his enormous liberty spikes to the beat. After their set is over, the men of the rhythm section ignore the various unattached punk ladies in attendance and opt to hit on a pack of jazzercise princesses instead. Other highlights include a Doberman humping a leg, Groucho Marx breakdancing, a lunch lady waving a vibrator and... I guess that's it. (*ZC*)

LOVERBOY

Dir. Joan Micklin Silver / 1989

Randy (Patrick Dempsey) is a pizza delivery boy
who sleeps with older broads to make college money.

The pizza delivery comedy is an underexplored genre and, along with *Delivery Boys*, this film is one of the best. Dempsey is charming and his comic timing is actually dead on. Note the scene where he falls down on a chair and bounces off a bed. The Coreys had nothing on this guy. At first, Randy is a party punk with spiked bleach blond hair; his savage friends crash a date and it turns into a beer blast. He decides to lose the rowdy image and clean up his act. He gets a job at Señor Pizza, where the employees must wear big fake mustaches and drive cars with giant sombreros on top. Too bad his father still thinks he's a fruit despite all the middle-aged tail he gets on the job. Husbands eventually catch on to Dempsey's affairs, and they're out for blood. Three of them (Vic Tayback, Robert Picardo and a bodybuilder!) get in a car and start their adrenaline pumping by blaring "Great Balls of Fire." Tayback has a Japanese security robot that cries, "Bad boy. Bad dude." E.G. Daily and Kirstie Alley also star. (*BC*)

LOWBALL

Dir. Demian Lichtenstein / 1997

Two undercover cops struggle to maintain their identity.

This heavy-handed, no-budget NYC actioner successfully includes every cliché of the Gritty Cop Film. There's the rogue, drug-addicted Bad Cop (the talented Peter Greene) who spirals out of control. His partner (Erik Schrody) is a Good Cop whose father was a legend on the force. Their captain is a hardboiled, gruff soldier of The Old Guard who revokes their guns and badges when they "cross the line." Bad Cop has a sexy, embittered ex-wife and infant son to saddle him with additional guilt and anguish. Italian gangsters in leather trench coats exchange briefcases on the waterfront while the elderly Mafia Don slurps pasta and pontificates on the importance of "respeck." There are shootouts in enclosed spaces where guns are held sideways, and scenes of men with slicked-back hair and sunglasses adjusting their jacket collars in slow motion. Everyone says the F-word a lot. The only non-obligatory character is a grim mohawked thug delivering smack to—who else?—the Colombians. The punk stands out from the rest of the cast physically while maintaining the film's requisite macho posturing. The closing credits state that the film is dedicated to this actor's memory. (*ZC*)

LUCAS

Dir. David Seltzer / 1986

Lucas wants to play on the high school football team in order
to win the heart of a girl who has been assimilated
by the Cro-Magnon jock clique. Yeah, right.

Does the "lovable loser" actually exist or is he/she/it a figment of the movie industry's imagination? I'm going to weigh in and call "fiction" on this stereotype. As losers in our formative years, most of our schooling previous to college/job/real life is where we punks, artists and right-brained creative types build the foundation and substance we need to become the strong-willed, independent, sensitive and culturally-endowed individuals we are today (generally speaking of course; some off themselves while others sell insurance to dull the pain).

Which brings us to Lucas (Corey Haim) who starts off a plain old alienated loser and ends up as the Lovable Loser archetype. Lucas is shunned by his peers for good reason: he's smarter than them, completely weird and dirty, and has an actual personality. As an outcast, he has plenty of time to foster his character-building interests, such as humane bug collecting (he sets the insects free after he catches them), listening to live classical music from the sewer via a conveniently placed manhole, and other generally dorky yet life-affirming activities. Being a Hollywood film, however, the audience must be entertained by a dynamic shift, which comes in the form of the Pretty New Girl (or PNG). This PNG is not as bland as most in the movies, and she is believable as a sympathetic and genuine friend to Lucas.

Of course, she's also his downfall. PNG falls for jock jagbag Charlie Sheen and inevitably leaves Lucas in the dust. Here, we are served yet another dynamic shift: now Lucas wants to gain acceptance from the knuckle-dragging mouthbreathers that constitute aforementioned jagbag's social circle in order to woo the PNG. Here is where the contradictory "lovable loser" term comes into play.

People are losers for a reason: weird hobbies, bad breath, acne, hostile attitude and, oftentimes, an interest in activities beyond drooling and blubbering. Acceptance from the fascist hierarchy is death of the spirit; all the characteristics that a loser is constructed from are inextricably linked to his or her alienation, never to be overcome, thank goodness. I'm not disputing the reality of Lucas' yearning for acceptance, but rather the possibility that it WOULD EVER FUCKING HAPPEN. We all want connection and acceptance, but it rarely happens, especially to losers. That's what makes us unique and interesting.

Hell, Lucas is even shunned by the punks. As he tries to make his way through a high school crowd to meet his lady love, Lucas comes up against a hand to the face (clothed in a fingerless leather glove, I might add) that belongs to a skunk-haired new waver. As always in these movies, the protagonist has a group of friends who are witty, bitter and intelligent, but he's dazzled by the brass ring. There's even a hip art chick that has a crush on Lucas, but he ignores her advances. C'MON! This shit drives me up the wall. Lucas would find solace in like-minded individuals, not in the heaving masses of humanoid mediocrity. So the phony-baloney feel-good ending feels even more hollow than usual; Lucas should be developing into a human being of his own making, while the movie wants him to find happiness in the acceptance of those that will morph him into a mindless drone. Of course, it's all done for romantic love...the most pervasive, bullshit motivation that has ever existed in the history of humanity, so I have to believe Lucas' motives are real. However, the realization of his goal is fallible due to one simple fact: he's a loser. *(SC)*

LUNCH MEAT

Dir. Kirk Alex / 1987

An ambitious City Boy vs. Hillbilly deathblast.

Five Hollywood preppies pile into the Volvo with their Siouxsie-esque friend for a weekend getaway in the hill country. The punk vacationer is perky, good-natured and the second to bite it when a four-man family of cannibalistic yokels begins a vicious meat harvest, falling prey to an axe that removes her dyed-black scalp in a single swing. From this point, *Lunch Meat* boils down to one extremely violent cat-and-mouse game after another, with the inbred carnivores swapping spurting wounds with the remaining urbanites. The gore effects and performances are all impressive, especially considering that the film was probably made in a single weekend for a budget of nine sandwiches. *(ZC)*

LUNCH WAGON

Dir. Ernest Pintoff / 1981

Valley girls sling the hash.

Rosanne Katon, Pamela Bryant and Candy Moore star as a trio of hard-luck LA pals who inherit a lunch truck after being fired from their gas station jobs. They set up at a construction site where their innuendo and undersized tank tops sell fried treats to every hard-hatted tough guy for miles. This raises the ire of competing snack merchant/mob boss Schmeckler, his doting mother *and* world-famous new wave act Missing Persons! The film is an unreasonably satisfying heap of musty Vegas-style gags and low-impact adventures, including a scene where an obese man gets three quarts of motor oil drained down his overalls.

The Battle of the Bands MC is undoubtedly the limpest new waver to ever point himself at a movie camera; a part-time stereo salesman whose blue-accented greasebomb pompadour clashes with his unbuttoned Hawaiian shirt. He later proves he's a bold individualist when he wears a dress made for a frumpy stepmom. *(ZC)*

MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME

Dirs. George Miller & George Ogilvie / 1985

The first film established an entire genre.
This one ended it.

A horrendously bloated, lifeless installment in what's otherwise the greatest post-apocalyptic saga in film history. Max (Mel Gibson) returns, older, dryer and longer-haired. But the future of the future isn't what it used to be, and this sequel crumbles beneath the weight of Hollywood supervision and a respectable budget. Sure, the leather squalor of nuked Australia is intact—along with all the near-mutated creepazoid fashion the series pioneered in its second film—but the perfectly rabid misanthropy has evaporated. A few shining moments in the film's initial Bartertown setting quickly give way to a (blecch) family-friendly adventure tale that sucks all the fun out of global annihilation. Miller was all set to make up for this travesty with a fourth entry in 2005, but Gibson opted out of the project because he was having too much fun turning Jesus' blood into money. (*ZC*)

MADAME WANG'S

Dir. Paul Morrissey / 1981

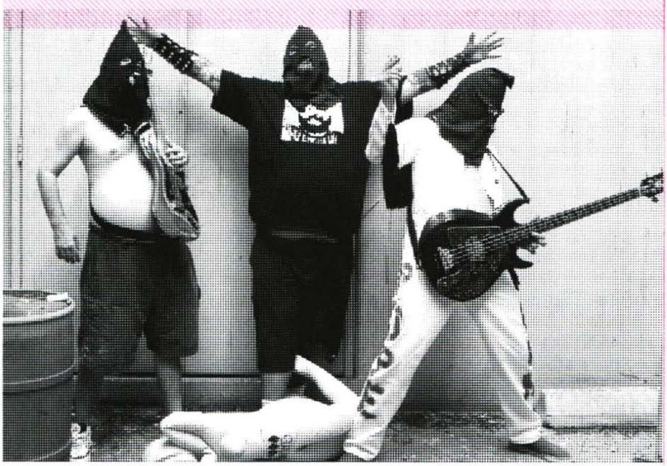
An East German spy swims ashore in LA and hangs out
with queers, trannies and punks.

Paul Morrissey spent time with the lower counterculture of the '60s and '70s, so why wouldn't he hang out with punks in the '80s? This features some of the best non-actors to ever grace the screen. A Baby Huey type in drag talks endlessly about McDonald's, peeing on women and nipple piercings. A jittery little man is obsessed with cleaning doorknobs; in one scene, he wears a T-shirt with a Sid Vicious obituary on it. Madame Wang—based on legendary LA punk venue proprietor Esther Wong—runs a punk rock Chinese restaurant. Her manager isn't impressed by the gay men who dance to disco acts. He complains they aren't punk enough, but thinks that German spy Lutz is *very* punk, even though he looks like the typical Morrissey/Warhol beefcake. Lutz himself isn't even sure who or what these "punks" are. His new prostitute friend describes them as "pink-haired rock and rollers." He eventually goes to Wang's. Here's where we get footage of The Mentors and Phranc as well as some lost obscurities like Leroy & The Lifters and Butch & The Boneheads. Leroy is something else; an Iggy Pop wannabe and ugly as all fuck, he tries to teach the doorknob man and the Baby Huey transvestite how to be punk. "I need some of that good satisfaction," he says, but doesn't get it when the fat man in drag attempts to emulate punk by wailing like a retard. Lutz gets a makeover, adopting styled hair, a dog collar, stud bracelet, leather pants and eye makeup. Not being musically talented, he just cuts himself on stage with a switchblade. Madame Wang likes it a lot.

This film was shot with mostly natural lighting and what seems like one not-so-functional microphone. None of this distracts from Morrissey's brilliant blend of grotesque art and absurd comedy. It feels in parts like a John Waters film, but Waters isn't fit to take out Morrissey's garbage. (*BC*)

SICKIE WIFEBEATER

Guitarist – The Mentors; Self – *MADAME WANG'S*



DAM: Tell me about shooting Madame Wang's.

SW: OK. I'll try. It may take me more than 30 seconds to remember. But I do recall that situation. I don't know what songs we played.

Was that done for the film, or were you just playing a show?

Naw, naw. They had like a high school gymnasium to shoot the scene in. Kinda like a basketball court.

And then they had all those hairy shirtless guys dancing around on stage with you —

They did?

Yeah. The movie's about a bunch of San Francisco queen types who are also into punk music.

A bunch of *what* kinda guys?!

Y'know, like bears. Hairy homosexual men.

Is that what "bears" are?

...Yes.

Furry homosexuals.

Yeah. It's a nickname.

Oh man. You know, I've read that. I was hanging out in Portland...which is a fag colony. And I was reading about some band of fags. I forget their name. And this article was about some fag that moved to England. And I was reading it because I like to read, and it says some guy was a favorite of "all the bear-lovers in the crowd." Like, "if you're into bears, this is your man." So I asked my bitch, "Hey, what's with this 'bear' thing?" She likes to keep me in the dark about everything so I end up having to look it up. And I just say, "Wow, this is the stupidest shit I've ever heard."

So you never saw the movie after you were in it?

I'm kinda glad I didn't because apparently they put us in a fag film. Who was the guy that made it?

Paul Morrissey.

Oh man.

So you remember, you were playing in a high school gym, bearded men dancing—

You know that's the type of shit that you really try to forget. But I'm glad you reminded because now I can get a vendetta going. What else did this Morrissey do? Is that where that other fag Morrissey got his name, from this one?

No. Maybe they're in the same family.

A family of fags! I can't believe this shit. I feel embarrassed. I never thought the term "bears" would be associated with anything we did.

[Long pause.]

Well...

You know what, it doesn't matter... I like fags.

MADE IN BRITAIN

Dir. Alan Clarke / 1982

A young skinhead unleashes mayhem
on everyone and everything around him.

Tim Roth plays unrepentant hardcore UK neo-Nazi Trevor, sentenced to a group recovery home after committing hate crimes against immigrants. Only 16 years old, he's already an unredeemable case, evidenced by both his behavior and the swastika tattooed on his forehead. His roommate Errol is a black student whom he alternately terrorizes and shanghais into participating in his criminal acts, from destruction of public property to defecating on the student files. Trevor also manages to neuter any possible future while at the employment center, when he swears at the elderly woman behind the counter and smashes a plate glass window. Auto theft, glue-sniffing and beatings are all in a day's work. The head of the recovery home does all he can to incorporate the rage-fueled skinhead into society—going so far as to involve him in a demolition derby—but it's all to no avail. When the facility can no longer contain him, Trevor takes his fury out for a night on the town, culminating in the inevitable.

Clarke's efficient and shockingly unbiased day-in-the-life tale was made for UK television, but nonetheless holds very true to the confrontational brutality of its subject. Certainly, there is no content editing for the home audience. The Trevor character is as relentlessly harsh as any similar beast from a restricted feature, and Roth's performance (at only 21 years old) is among the most convincing of his career. When asked if he was concerned about playing such an offensive figure, Roth stated, "It's important. If we don't make movies about people like this, do they go away?" Much of the soundtrack provided by British mohawk icons The Exploited. (ZC)

MAJOR LEAGUE

Dir. David S. Ward / 1989

Bad baseball team makes good.

So, *Major League* is a film about baseball—particularly the Cleveland Indians—and how putting the old honker to the grindstone can result in winning games and overcoming adversity. Hey, we could parlay the theme and formula of this movie into our own lives and become happy, healthy and, most importantly, upstanding citizens. Ah, baseball as an analogy for life. Don't you love it when personal lessons can be learned from sports and film? I don't.

Major League is wholly inoffensive, one of those rare '80s romps that you can watch with your parents; no bodacious ta-tas, no gratuitous coarse language, and scant sex/gay jokes. While watching the film, you may find yourself thinking, "I don't particularly like this movie, but it sure is entertaining, what with all the baseball and wacky antics." This picture even goes light on the requisite this-racial-stereotyping-sure-is-hilarious bit that's a built-in standard for most '80s comedy.

The above summary of the plot is really all the detail you need as far as the story goes, and all the actors do a fine job of being actors in baseball uniforms (except for Charlie Sheen, who seems content walking around the set in a post-cocaine binge coma). The film is a blur of soma-induced gray; pleasurable while it's happening and utterly forgotten the minute the credits roll.

Despite the mohawked baseball prominently featured on the theatrical poster, I really went through some major hand-wringing and mental anguish while trying to decide whether or not punks appear in this movie. At the end of the film, during the climactic game, the camera cuts to various spectators, including a bar filled with mostly working-class, mustachioed sports fans. However, as we pan down the bar, the viewer is met with a curious sight: two subcultural amalgams that show no allegiance to any one specific genre of human, represented by the mutant ensembles the costume department has whipped together. The male of this mysterious species shows signs of possibly being punk from the neck up, with an unruly if highly stylized bleached white new wave rat's nest hairdo. Direct your gaze downward, however, and behold his RUN DMC black turtleneck and suit jacket with a bevy of Eric B. and Rakim gold chains around his pale white neck. The female of the species wears fingerless Ebenezer Scrooge gloves to complement her Motörhead/Madonna aesthetic hybrid.

My justification for christening these nomads as punks is as follows: the filmmakers obviously wanted to brand these two extras as misfits in order to show baseball as the great equalizer; the freaks embrace the rough-and-tumble working-class bros when the Indians inevitably win the big game. Someone involved with *Major League* was not able to put their finger on what a punk (or even a Hollywood punk) looks like, so the audience is treated to these potpourri outcasts, whose outfits draw from cock-rock, hip-hop and punk as to visually signify "These two do not belong." (*SC*)

MAKING MR. RIGHT

Dir. Susan Seidelman / 1987

Proving once and for all that androids make better boyfriends than politicians, scientists and actors.

In *Weird Science* and *Mannequin,* it was all about fulfilling the male fantasy: giving their godlike protagonists the power to give life to their dream girls. Finally, with *Making Mr. Right*, it's a woman's turn. Frankie Stone (N.Y. art/punk scene hero Ann Magnuson) is a true '80s archetype: the power-suited female exec who is successful in everything except for love, her designer handbag bearing a library of man-hating self-help lit and one dusty ol' diaphragm. Even her little sister Ivy (Susan Berman from Seidelman's classic *Smithereens*) has managed to find a suitable mate, despite unshaven armpits and a mess of matted azure hair. At least at her wedding she'll have the "something blue" covered.

After dumping her opportunistic, flaky politician boyfriend, Frankie throws herself into her work as a public relations wizard. Hired to raise the profile of a group of scientists struggling to keep their federal funding, she meets Ulysses, an android that is the doppelgänger of its creator, misanthropic scientist Jeff Peters (John Malkovich with a *Flash Gordon* hairdo). Frankie wants to humanize Ulysses, making him more sympathetic to the public, but meets with resistance from Jeff, who wants to keep Ulysses insentient to prepare him for lengthy solo stints in space.

Malkovich does great work playing both the mopey lab dweller who eschews humanity and the childlike cyborg who desperately seeks it. And, in case you're wondering, it turns out Mr. Right is well-endowed, sensitive and willing to give up everything for the woman he loves. That, and he has a removable head. Don't settle for anything less, ladies. (*LAF*)

MALLRATS

Dir. Kevin Smith / 1995

The day in the life of a bunch of mall-walking jerks.

In 30 years, no one will care. Too much of Smith's humor relies on pop culture references, which horribly date any comedy. The viewer is lucky if the camera moves an inch. And this is his best film. It's amusing to see Ben Affleck as the sleazy bully. Jason Lee is very likeable in that smart-ass role he's good at. Michael Rooker is always great and here he plays an evil game-show host. A man in a red mohawk walks by in the background while Jeremy Lunden and Jason Lee talk about whether they're going to stay for a game-show taping. This level of white-knuckle showmanship is maintained by Smith throughout. (*BC*)

MANIA: EPISODES IN TERROR

Dirs. Paul Lynch, David M. Robertson
& John Sheppard / 1986

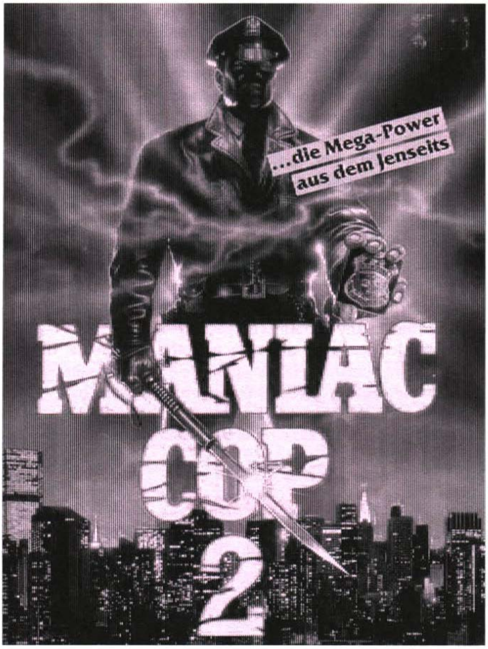
An anthology of feasible New York horror tales.

This is an oddball production on all sides. Where most horror omnibuses at least partly focus on supernatural threats, TV movie *Mania* covers strictly realistic ground. Burglaries, kidnappings, obsessives and sadists are the new urban boogeymen. Acting and overall quality is very professional, but one can't help but be distracted by the nagging question: Why was this made? Was it broadcast as cautionary tales to big-city denizens, or was it a compendium of the personal fears of its creators? In the first segment, titled "The Good Samaritan," a drunk Irish-American businessman squares off with three teen punks in a subway station. One rabid youth has a curly green afro, while their chain-laden leader sports an ornate hand-painted spiderweb on his face. The businessman calls them "walking garbage." (*ZC*)

MANIAC COP 2

Dir. William Lustig / 1990

Hate-powered reanimated police officer Matt Cordell
stalks and slays without mercy.



The greatest '80s movie of the '90s! Exploitation maestro Lustig had plumbed the depths of murderous insanity in *Maniac* (1980) and leapt wildly into two-fisted revenge pics with *Vigilante* (1983), but it was with *Maniac Cop 2* that he found the perfect combination. The film opens with a chest-bursting shootout and never lets up: junkies kill innocents, bodies are thrown through windows, women are strangled and key characters are knifed through the throat. In a particularly adrenaline-pumping scene, Cordell (the mighty Robert Z'dar) invades the police precinct and throws a man through five walls with one toss. The film's only punk shows up in one of its rare quiet moments, as a young lady in black leather combat clothing politely holds the door for two officers as they grab a snack. But with the exception of that act of kindness, *Maniac Cop 2* is a heartwarmingly barbaric testament to violence. (*ZC*)

MARAUDERS

Dir. Mark Savage / 1987

Two alcoholic teenage psychopaths with New Romantic hairdos terrorize small-town Australia with brutal acts of random violence.

Aussie director Mark Savage's first feature is akin to an early Jim Van Bebber film, with its backyard video nihilistic view of self-destructive and anti-social teenage life taken to extremes. Vicious and politically incorrect, the film centers on two groups of characters. There's teenage psychopaths Emilio and JD, and, on the other side, sleazy pseudo-stud David and his naïve girlfriend Becky; who, in the course of a day, will seal each others' fates with their mutual moral ineptitude. When the film opens, the lunatics are in full swing, with a two-person body count in as many minutes.

The teen villains are played by Colin Savage and Zero Montana, the latter wearing jeans with the ass completely cut out and red bikini briefs glaring through. Colin has a role in most of his brother's films, but it's in *Marauders*, as the sadistic new wave thug Emilio, that his talent truly shines. That said, his acting ability is somewhat dwarfed by his magnificent coif. Every salon in the world should have a picture of Colin Savage's hair in their front window to prove their worthiness because if they can recreate *that*, they've got immense talent.

I was lucky enough to speak with director Mark Savage to ask him about The Hair:

"It took my brother at least two hours to sculpt that hair every morning before shooting, and almost a full can of hairspray. As we both love John Foxx, Ultravox, Visage, Human League and the New Romantic movement, we wanted that type of person represented in the movie. I insisted he exaggerate the hair as an ode to Marine Boy and Prince Planet, too." Wow!

Even if the film wasn't extremely violent (which it is) with REAL car accidents, incredible punching matches that go on for 20 minutes, children being stabbed and a woman being dragged by a car, there's still The Hair and The Pants, which are worth the price of a rental all on their own. (*KJ*)

MARSHAL LAW

Dir. Stephen Cornwell / 1996

A gated community's high-tech security system is rendered inoperable by an earthquake, leaving a retired federal marshal to defend the residents against a vicious gang.

Jimmy Smits stars as Jack Coleman, a former marshal with a not-so-subtle horse fetish. His new job is designing security systems for fancy neighborhoods and his latest project is called Centaur. On Christmas Eve, he brings his horse and kids to visit his obnoxious yuppie business partner in a gated community protected by Centaur. Little did Coleman imagine that he'd be spending the holidays tussling with a bullshit movie gang. While they're supposed to be a vicious crew of crackhead ex-cons that live in a van, the villains are well-groomed and sharply attired in the most badass threads The Gap has to offer. James LeGros, in a crisp white T-shirt, plays Cougar (yep...Cougar), the cop-hating head hooligan. Amongst the other dweebs is a goth-esque dude with a choker, chains, shiny black pants and spiked hair. The Cougar Crew is out looking for cheap thrills (aka alcohol and rape) and inevitably cross paths with Coleman and his trusty steed. The violence kicks in and then, all of a sudden, EARTHQUAKE!!! The tremors knock out the neighborhood's power, compromise the Centaur system and the gang declares war on Coleman, his family, his goddamn horse and the rest of the community. If you saw *Die Hard* as many times as this film's writers did, you can pretty much guess how the rest of *Marshal Law* unfolds. But did *Die Hard* feature a zany pizza delivery guy? Nope. (*SH*)

MARY JANE'S NOT A VIRGIN ANYMORE

Dir. Sarah Jacobson / 1997

A young woman makes friends with her colleagues and her vagina.

The first and only feature from the late Jacobson, director of short film *I Was a Teenage Serial Killer*. High school student Jane is unimpressed with her first attempt at sex, and returns to a raging work party to grump at her movie-house co-workers. Her friend has just come back from tour, dragging home a blue-haired boy toy, and the two nuzzle over the punk mixtape blaring through the speakers.

Jane discusses her disappointing coitus with whoever will listen, including fellow employee Ryan, a soft-spoken straight-edge skater who collects '70s happy face doodads. Everyone is quick to tell their lost-virginity horror stories, which results in Jane feeling closer to friends and enemies alike. She accompanies the suave Tom to "one of those throw-up punk rock parties" where another blue-haired teen small talks with pals beneath an Amebix poster. Eventually, everyone's beer-soaked, embezzling, pregnant ways dissolve the theater's dysfunctional family, but by that point, Jane has moved into a new phase of her life thanks to newfound alliances and the magic of masturbation. Jello Biafra shows up in cameos as a hippie and a member of "the Traditional Values Committee." (*ZC*)

THE MASK

Dir. Chuck Russell / 1994

Average joe Stanley (Jim Carrey) finds an exotic mask which changes his life overnight.

Based on the severely violent 1989 comic book, this big-screen shenanigan factory whitewashes the protagonist's cop-killing antics, replacing them with vaudeville hip-thrusting, T-shirt-ready catch phrases and some deeply painful conga beats. During Stanley's first romp out as The Mask, he runs into a pack of hooligans that includes a girl with a fuchsia mohawk and tattoos on the side of her head. Smmmmmmmmokin'. (*BI/ZC*)

A MATTER OF DEGREES

Dir. W.T. Morgan / 1990

The emotional trials of a guy who looks like he's been in school longer than Archie.

Twenty-one-year-old college student/auto mechanic Max (played by 30-year-old actor Arye Gross) is terrified of leaving his Providence, RI college life for the adult world. To avoid responsibility, he smokes dope, listens to brain-damaging '90s alternative rock and engages in wine-fogged three-ways with his friends and roommates. Max personifies the endless shamefulness of independent music's most self-entitled phase, and shuffles through a series of mistakes seemingly designed to make the viewer wish they'd spent the '90s in a coma rather than spending 90 minutes snoring through this film. Campus station KXOX provides a soundtrack to his pathetically childish self-loathing, with rotating DJ shifts performed by the likes of John Doe and The B-52s' Kate Pierson and Fred Schneider. As you'd expect from a film like this, the black guy has a rap show, the Texan spins country and so on. Punk legend Ian MacKaye was once told that a character in this movie was modeled after him, though there's exactly zero onscreen evidence to support that statement. Footage of San Pedro's punk innovators the Minutemen can be seen through the opening credits and the film is dedicated to their departed frontman D. Boon. Fortunately, the group's albums lay out an infinitely richer legacy of youth alienation than this nutrag VHS release could ever aspire to. (*ZC*)

MAYA

Dir. Marcello Avallone / 1989

An ancient Mayan curse causes murder and mayhem.

Opening with a quote from celebrity mystic Carlos Castaneda, *Maya* is part of the otherwise-nonexistent, supernaturally-themed Italian "south-of-the-border" gore genre. The movie was shot in Venezuela, but seems to be set in Mexico, as the story deals with Mayans. Like many '80s Italian horror films, *Maya's* plot serves as a loose outline to connect together several gory set pieces, some spooky images, a little softcore sex and maybe a rape or two, but the movie's exotic setting makes it a little different than its contemporaries.

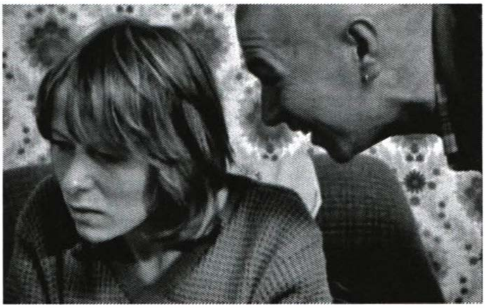
An archeologist poking around the ruins of an old temple accidentally unleashes an invisible murderous force that gruesomely kills a few innocents. The doc's daughter teams up with one of his friends in order to solve the mystery of the Mayan curse and stop the killings. One thing you notice in *Maya* is how obnoxious all of the gringos are. The lead is a total dickhead, a lazy, womanizing drunk who's unbearably annoying even when his character is supposed to be charming. Most of the victims of the curse are white and the subtext of the film is definitely pro-indigenous and anti-tourist.

But we're not here to celebrate *Maya's* socially progressive political agenda, just to discuss its punks. Though the main whitey is a douchebag, there are two punks in this movie who make him look like Gandhi. Their names are Sid and Chet and they drive a hulking truck with Texas plates and "Top Gun" painted on the side. Chet is a chubby, giggly greaser in a sleeveless black shirt; he doesn't necessarily look the part but his actions and associates indicate that he's indeed a punk. Then there's Sid, who wins the prize as both the film's biggest jerk-off and punkest punk; he's got short spiked blond hair, an acid-washed jean/vest combo, one studded black leather half-glove and the requisite Really Bad Attitude. These unpleasant turistas attempt to rape a female gas station attendant (twice!) and also trash a bar, harass people, laugh hysterically for no reason, cut themselves with knives and brag about pissing on the local religion. At one point, Sid goes too far and shoots a booger at somebody. Director Avallone does his best to make sure these punks score high on the Jerk-O-Meter so it's pretty satisfying when these two fuckheads meet their demise. Ironically, the Mayan spirit possesses old Top Gun herself and uses the truck to kill the bastards while a hybrid synth/rockabilly/pseudo-punk song is heard on the soundtrack. Let this film stand as a lesson for Ugly Americans (and punks) all over the world: stop being such assholes! (*SH*)

MEANTIME

Dir. Mike Leigh / 1984

People are very sad in England.



Very little plot, but an interesting character study about early '80s working-class British youth. Tim Roth is incredible as Colin, a sluggish, pimply-faced kid...a real mouthbreather. He's constantly called a Muppet. Never in your life will you see an actor play pathetic as well as this. Most actors play pathetic for laughs or sympathy. You get none of that here.

Dad complains about the youth destroying phone booths. A gang of skinheads hangs outside the unemployment office. Colin's older brother pals it up with the skinheads, says "Oi" a lot and plays loud punk music while dad tries to sleep. He doesn't follow in the fashion of his skin pals; instead he looks like some sort of weekday morning show film critic. Later, Colin shaves his own head bald. Gary Oldman's character Coxy belches and tries to convince Colin to buy Doc Martens. In one scene, Coxy sings "Kung Fu Fighting," then quacks like a duck. Sometimes this film really gets you down, not because it's bad, but because it's sort of like watching rain for a hundred minutes. (*BC*)

MEN...

Dir. Doris Dörrie / 1985

An ad exec moves in with the artist who slept with his wife.

Julius is shocked to find a hickey on his wife's neck. It's hard to feel sympathy for him since he was already sleeping with his secretary. He follows the hickey-maker to a punk club. Inside, multiple dudes with leather jackets and towering, colorful haircuts sit around and drink. One enters by throwing down a red blanket and walking across it while holding his hands up in triumph as his counterculture compadres applaud. A not-so-interesting (or believable) interaction occurs soon after between our out-of-place stuffy protagonist and a decked-out female anarchist:

PUNK GIRL: You're really bitchin'.

JULIUS: Thanks.

This is the extent of the thrills in this 90-minute shift at the snooze factory. I think this is supposed to be a comedy, but I couldn't tell because I never found myself laughing or having fun. On the video box, renowned cinephile Leonard Maltin declares the film "an ingenious comedy-satire." I'm going to come out right now and call this Maltin character a fraud. (*BC*)

METROLAND

Dir. Philip Saville / 1997

A nice man falls under the influence of a not-nice man.

The late '70s in the London suburbs. Chris (Christian Bale) does his best to feel content with his mortgage, steady job, baby and marriage to Marion (Emily Watson). His middle-class veneer is suddenly dented by the reemergence of childhood friend Toni (Lee Ross), who mocks Chris' sedate world and tirelessly attempts to drag him back down into irresponsibility. Chris surprises his wife by telling her he'll be joining his friend at a punk show, to which she replies, "Are you kidding? You HATE punk!" He makes the plunge regardless, watching in disinterest as inaccurate '77 UK punk representatives The Subverts chant, "Destroy the hoi polloi!" The attending youths run the gamut from punters to glamshock new wavers to a single time-warped Mötley Crüe fan, all bouncing off one another and tossing their beverages at the stage as instructed by the film's 67-year-old director. (*ZC*)

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

Dir. Jack Bender / 1985

High school students use sorcery to raise the dead.

In this unrelentingly entertaining TV movie, teenagers in a small Massachusetts town break into a witchcraft museum and "borrow" a scroll that resurrects all the local corpses as a cross between vampires and zombies. A costume party yields several punk types, including a pseudo-new wave Frankenstein and a couple with actual mohawks. Another teen exhibits a Fear logo on the sleeve of his leather jacket, which is rendered moot by the peace sign splayed across the back. My hope is that he's just a lazy punk and this is his half-assed hippie costume. Nerd protagonist Phil (Lee Montgomery) even gets some fashion shock in, wearing a Dracula suit, owl-like face paint and a silver glitter wig. Phil's crush Mary shows up with color-blotched hair, wearing a biker jacket with torn stockings. She asks for safety pins to glue to her cheek because she "wants to go total punk."

Zompires inevitably crash the party and are very excited about a coffin full of popcorn. Also unleashed by the accidental incantation is a hyperactive werewolf. Shari Belafonte performs the song "Get Dead," strutting alongside a guy in a football jersey, green wig and diaper, which leads to all the zombies and teens unleashing a massive choreographed dance attack!

What other movie gives you Dick Van Patten, Levar Burton and Kevin McCarthy as monsters? The fantastic cast also includes *RoboCop's* Kurtwood Smith, as well as intermittent voiceover from radio super-celebrity Wolfman Jack. But the best performance may come from Jonelle Allen as revived vampire witch Lucinda Cavender, who assesses Mary's punk costume and says, "In my day, if someone looked like that, people would say she was possessed...she'd be burned at the stake!" (*ZC*)

MIKE'S MURDER

Dir. James Bridges / 1984

A relationship turns sour when half of the couple dies.

The film begins with some tennis playing to third grade-caliber piano music that segues to some lovemaking to eighth grade-caliber piano music. Two people can be blamed for this unfortunate ivory tickling: Joe Jackson and John Barry. The writing isn't much better. Mike does die, but it unfortunately takes about 40 minutes. The film was originally written and edited to have the events play backwards, but the studio got too sweaty and changed it to take place in chronological order. When I say that peeling potatoes is higher octane than this "thriller," it's no exaggeration. Debra Winger is our star and she talks on the phone, drives and looks concerned. There's also her artist friend, who philosophizes while eating sushi. At his big art show, he videotapes himself talking to actual LA punk scene-maker Spazz Attack about the unconscious mind. Two leather-jacketed punks with matching bleached hair soon ruin his party. They push the arty-farty man around, forcing him to retaliate with some serious whining. The Tubes, B-52's and Devo flesh out the soundtrack to this lullaby. (*BC*)

MIRROR, MIRROR

Dir. Marina Sargenti / 1990

A displaced teenage girl is empowered by evil furniture.

Actress Rainbow Harvest (really) plays limping, underweight mega-goth Megan, who has relocated from Los Angeles with her mother (Karen Black) to a small town filled with gawking jerks. Their home is the former residence of an unhinged black arts practitioner who'd locked evil spirits in her ornate mirror, a gnarled Victorian antique which Megan immediately adopts as her own. She starts her first day of class in all her blackest finery, prompting a fellow student to whisper, "I'm so sure. Punk is out." The mirror wastes no time in unleashing horrible visions and, eventually, worse. Soon her mocking classmates are targets for major paranormal assaults, especially after the most popular clique suits up to mimic Megan's monochromatic attire, each sporting spiderweb eyeliner and fishnet sleeves. Even top-notch character actor Stephen Tobolowsky falls prey to the haunted mirror's wrath, and Yvonne "Lily Munster" DeCarlo is a welcome addition as an intervening antique dealer. (*ZC*)

MIRROR, MIRROR 2: RAVEN DANCE

Dir. Jimmy Lifton / 1994

The diabolical looking glass returns to stir up
more violence and viewer boredom.

A shirtless scumbag rock band set up in a Catholic orphanage to perform for teen girl Marley, her mentally-disabled kid brother and no one else. The singer has a ponytail mohawk framed with strategic tattoos of nuke symbols and chains, while the military jarhead-punk haircut on the skeez bassist conjures images of ICP over MDC. Fortunately, a shrewdly-aimed bolt of supernatural lightning bursts from within a cursed mirror and reduces them to smoking heaps of charred fauxpunk shit-rubble. Afterwards, the mirror continues to wreak havoc on the siblings and resident nuns. Oh, and at one point, Marley does a "raven dance." Roddy McDowall, Sally Kellerman and the great William Sanderson sully their names by appearing opposite a haunted piece of furniture. In addition to these familiar names, there's a cat called Pyewacket, and the lead actress says his name 14 times throughout the film. Meanwhile, pure evil manifests in the form of wind-up chimps and stained glass knights that decapitate old ladies. (*ZC*)

MOD FUCK EXPLOSION

Dir. Jon Moritsugu / 1994

Mods plan a rumble with vocally delayed Japanese bikers.

Ah, behold the mind of Jon Moritsugu. It's a world of distorted stereotypes, ugly people and bucketfuls of angst. This is the story of Japanese bikers led by Kazumi (director Moritsugu), who refers to himself as "one sexy yellow stud." It's also the story of mods led by Madball. Stuck in the middle is London, a young punk rock girl whose only desire is to own a black leather jacket. M16, a sort of gender-indeterminable Sal Mineo, tries to fit into a scooter world on a moped while forever in search of his/her own Ralph Macchio.

Beyond the actual point of the movie (which is to get London her leather jacket and to get M16 laid) is the rumble between the two gangs. The venom between both factions is expressed when Madball explains to Kazumi how they're going to "kick their stupid Chink asses," which Kazumi corrects by explaining that "they aren't chinks... they're greasy Nipponese from Japan." Along the way is an assortment of other freakish people such as London's drunken, incestuous mother. There's a record-store robbery where the prize of the haul is a plaster cast of Grace Jones' dick. M16 gives dramatic readings of the day's news stories, such as "Man Chops Up Baby and Feeds It to the Family German Shepherd." And don't miss the Shit Goddess in the bathtub. (*JH*)

MODEL

Dir. Frederick Wiseman / 1980

A documentary on the New York modeling industry.

Like Robert Frank's drug-heavy Rolling Stones chronicle *Cocksucker Blues*, this film deglamourizes the subject matter. The tedious work involved with the fashion world is on full display. People are either painfully bored or deeply fascinated by Wiseman's films, though the slow pacing always allows the viewer to witness genuine moments between the film's subjects. In one scene, a model says she was going for a harder style and wants to be "a little more punky." Her photos show her looking fairly modest with a Debbie Harry appeal: leather jacket, striped shirt, blond hair and intense makeup. The person looking over her portfolio comments about the "extremes in the clothing." Wiseman's casual third-person style is much more interesting than the let's-see-the-filmmaker's-annoying-opinionated-face approach of most modern documentaries. (BC)

MODERN GIRLS

Dir. Jerry Kramer / 1986

A fun-lovin' group of young ladies searches through the
LA night to find rock star Bruno X.

A true '80s shit capsule. The first big scene at a dance club features women dressed as mermaids, black-light dancers and a wild thing dancing while taking Polaroids of herself. People get really excited when the DJ whips out an album by Humpe & Humpe. This scene is preceded by a not-so-exciting montage of a man waiting impatiently on a couch to the tune of Chris Isaak's "Dancin'."

All the ladies are obsessed with Bruno X. He sports a black trench coat, has spiky hair and wears a metal belt to accent his stud bracelet. The girls chase him all over town. They run into Arab terrorists in a limo. They go to a goth club where they talk about how "life gets better." The goths shake their heads in disagreement. There's a scene at a hick bar where one of the girls, played by Virginia Madsen, almost gets gang-raped on a pool table. This comedic moment peaks when her friends swoop in to tell the sex-hungry men that she has toxic shock and they'd better watch out. Hahahahahahaha!

Just like in *Dirty Laundry*, a bus shaped like a giant bag of Wonder Bread shows up. In this film, it's featured as a tour bus of after hours sleaze. A punk with green hair rides up front. The finale takes place at an elite club where a food fight breaks out, but the club is so yuppified that only fresh fruit is thrown. Booo! People at the club are impressed by Bruno X's sensitive spoken-word jazz. Double Booooo! The film's end credits scroll over a Depeche Mode song. Triple infinity BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!! The soundtrack also features the song "Game I Can't Win" by Dennis Quaid, who isn't even in this damn movie. (*BC*)

MODULATIONS

Dir. Lara Lee / 1998

Get out your pacifiers and glow sticks...it's gonna be a long night.

With an emphasis on early innovators like John Cage, Robert Moog and Kraftwerk, this documentary traces the progression of electronic music and the impact of rave culture on the world. For instance, the first Love Parade—an annual public rave—took place in Berlin in 1989. Four months later, the Berlin Wall came down. Coincidence? Definitely. In the footage from that event, one can't help but feel sorry for the small army of hardboiled punks camped out by the wall to protest, completely unaware of the looming bass attack.

In an interview with hardcore jungle producer Panacea, he muses, "When I am listening to one of my records, I think...oh my God, what have I done?" After you finish watching *Modulations*, you'll be wondering the same thing. The film works to prove the point that every sound is music. That doesn't mean the results are always pleasant, a truth acknowledged by one of the artists who describes himself as a noise terrorist. In fact, the uncontrollable need to share all the mechanical whirs and clanks of every item within reach makes techno the Twitter of musical genres. (*LAF*)

MOLLY & GINA

Dir. Paul Leder / 1994

After their significant others are murdered, two women team up and become involved in a larger mystery.

The opening credits feature a lengthy "exotic dance" by a punk stripper. In the film she has a blue, white and silver wedge-cut, wears a leather choker and a g-string. Unfortunately, this is just a supporting character who provides the requisite nudity and is only in one other scene. I wanted more punks and, instead, got the predictable story of how Molly (Frances Fisher) and Gina (Natasha Gregson Wagner) became friends and solved a crime. Molly is the secretary/girl Friday for a private investigator looking for the missing granddaughter (*Showgirls*' Elizabeth Berkley) of some rich jerk. Gina is an aspiring actress who wears a lime-green wig for the first third of the film and later switches to a flashy green/platinum number that makes her head look like a snow cone. They are obviously stage rugs but some of the movie's characters think Gina is some sort of crazy-haired punkette, which she is most certainly not. Director Leder scripted this with his son Reuben and they fashioned their derivative film on the works of Dashiell Hammet and Raymond Chandler, with Molly providing stereotypical hardboiled narration. A female detective/buddy film might have been a good idea, but not this one. To add insult to injury, the movie is made additionally unwatchable due to an overused, headache-inducing sax 'n' synth soundtrack that was clearly borrowed from a softcore sex flick. (*SH*)

MONDO NEW YORK

Dir. Harvey Keith / 1988

A tireless expose of madcap New York night life.

Lydia Lunch sets the stage with a carnival barker introduction, laying bare the array of misfits and lame-o's that comprise the big city. Immediately afterward, a young blond woman wanders through a clustered group of studded punks. The doc continues to follow this curious traveler through various adventures in low art, including performances from Karen Finley and explosive ham Joe Coleman, interactive S&M showcases, drag mutant cabaret and graphic heroin use. The camera often cuts away to punks and even more vicious fashion criminals in a steady attempt to sell the viewer on NYC's intensity. The kids go wild at a packed CBGB show where unseen post-Dictators offshoot Manitoba's Wild Kingdom blast out a version of "New York, New York." But the filmmakers most definitely save the best for last, as bare bones new wavers Dean & the Weenies bring down the house with their shoulda-been-classic anthem "Fuck You." (*ZC*)

STUART KLINGER

Dean and the Weenies – MONDO NEW YORK

SK: Dean and the Weenies were formed back in the early '80s by Dean Johnson. It was supposed to be kind of a twisted, gay Josie and the Pussycats. Dean had been doing drag shows, and just expanded that into a full band. Normally that type of stuff had been done with recorded music, so it was pretty innovative. He'd come from the Boy Bar scene, which was a big center of gay activity in the '80s. That's where I first met him. Later, I had the opportunity to audition for the band.

The *Mondo New York* release party was at this great space called The World. Dean had a night there once a week called Rock 'n' Roll Fag Bar, and he was having 1500 people a night that were going there. The movie brought the band some notoriety. There was a moment when a lot of people were interested. There was some satellite channel that was showing Dean's "Fuck You" segment as a music video.

He was murdered just recently. He suffered a very mysterious death, partly because he had such an unusual lifestyle. He'd put together these underground gay parties for people, with pretty out-there stuff. And someone invited him out to do a party, and someone spiked his drink with Parkinson's disease drugs. It was a horror story...he turned up in the morgue with no identification. It was twisted and dark and very painful.

MONDO WEIRDO: A TRIP TO PARANOIA PARADISE

Dir. Carl Andersen / 1990

Cannibalistic ladies make love and wreak havoc.

When creating a pretentious film:

1. Dedicate it to Jean-Luc Godard and Jess Franco.
2. Feature graphic sex only to be shocking or weird. One method would be to include a nude lady wearing a dog collar, intense new wave eye makeup and styled hair.
3. Don't skimp on creepy mannequins.
4. Pen a six-page nonsensical, dreamlike script.
5. Make certain that it's boring as all hell. (*BC*)

THE MONEY PIT

Dir. Richard Benjamin / 1986

A young couple is tricked into buying the house from hell.

There is nothing more satisfying than the Tom Hanks freak-out, a moment sorely missed from modern films. It's that part in every '80s Hanks film when he loses it and starts making strange sounds. Here, it's when the bathtub falls through the second floor and smashes to pieces. Take it in. Live the dream. The Tom Hanks freak-out. *The Money Pit* has some truly jaw-dropping moments of crumbling staircases and turkeys blasting out of stoves. The ultimate scene is the Rube Goldberg-esque gag that leaves Hanks covered in paint, getting peed on by a statue of a baby. The first batch of laborers to work on the house is a large armada of punks, bikers and a midget who swiftly take to the humble abode with sledgehammers and axes. (*BC*)

THE MONSTER CLUB

Dir. Roy Ward Baker / 1980

An all-beast bar is the setting for supernatural fairytales.

A light and outrageously enjoyable addition to the long-running UK horror anthology legacy. Hammer/Amicus mainstays Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing are here switched out for fun-lovin' American spooksters Vincent Price and John Carradine, who provide the wraparound story for the film's three main tales. *The Monster Club* is unusual for many reasons, one being that the stories follow an innovative genealogical monster chart. Established at the beginning of the film, this roadmap of creature biology lays out what happens when a human procreates with a ghoul—resulting in a "humegoo"—and explains the genesis of other nightstalking hybrids like "shadmocks" and even more ambitious variations.

Each tale told follows one of these monsters, with talented guest actors like Stuart Whitman and Donald Pleasence rounding out the victim roster. But without question the most entertaining presences are Carradine and Price, respectively playing horror author Hayes and a gentlemanly vampire. After snacking on the writer's neck, kindly bloodsucker Erasmus (Price) admits he's a fan of his books and invites the dazed old man back to a top-secret subterranean Monster Club. The place is everything a 10-year-old boy could dream of, alive with hopping zombies and high-stepping werewolves jitterbugging to moppish band The Viewers, who sing, "Monsters rule, OK!!" Vampire and victim take a seat and spend the evening swapping morbid stories.

Between each segment, a different rock act takes the spotlight, including Brit-rock mainstays The Pretty Things. A blue-lipped glam singer is followed by a blaring red-headed songstress who wails about a stripper's tribulations while a cabaret dancer disrobes down to her bones. At the film's climax, Erasmus extends Hayes the first-ever mortal membership to the Monster Club, justifying his decision by the fact that the human race has committed more atrocities than any monster could ever imagine. The assembled creatures howl their approval and everyone makes a final trip to the dance floor, offering the viewer a chance to see two grandfatherly terror legends cutting a rug to '80s rock. Though the film was shot toward the end of both actors' lives, it's clear that they're having an obscene amount of fun; grinning wide while shaking their tailfeathers with the subhuman elite. Speaking of the assorted monstrosities, the mask work is charmingly inept, each otherworldly visage looking—in the best possible way—like a $1 Halloween clearance item. A circulated rumor held that producer Milton Subotsky hired his milkman to design the masks, one of which is a baby-faced cyclops with a blue mohawk to match his modestly punk attire. (*ZC*)

MONSTER HIGH

Dir. Rudiger Poe / 1989

Mr. Armageddon decides to bring about the end of the world, beginning with a small high school.

This "comedy" starts off with two aliens flying to earth with a stolen doomsday device that resembles a basketball. For some reason, the

hairless beings are constantly referred to as skinheads, but they must be that good non-racist kind because they seem to just hate humans in general. Out of the doomsday device pops Mr. Armageddon, who looks a lot like early '80s Johnny Cash, and when he starts messing with the kids, things get pretty wack. Prepare yourself for a zombie with a gun and a marijuana monster. Yawn. All of the teenagers are played by people in their early thirties. Among the students is a red-haired Ramones poseur and a kid with a mohawk. The total screen time for these schmoes is about half a second. This one's only for fans of booby-grabbing mummies. (BC)

MONSTROSITY

Dir. Andy Milligan / 1989

Three nerds avenge a woman's death by building a golem.

Grieving the loss of his girlfriend, a young man patches together a Frankenstein's monster of human chunks and gorilla parts, played by Milligan movie veteran Hal Borske. What rises from the surgical table is a bucktoothed goon in an Art Garfunkel wig, tasseled shirt and platform shoes. He's nicknamed Frankie and commanded by the would-be scientist and his friends to seek out the murderers.

Meanwhile, a gang of new wave lowlifes cruises the streets, led by a 50-year-old bald greaseball named KC who wears four neckties to showcase his punk attitude. He proves his love for his girlfriend Jamie by carving his name in her shoulder. She already had "Property of KC" tattooed on her buttock, but is nonetheless flattered by his romantic display. KC loves another woman as well, as evidenced by the enormous "MOM" tattoo on his forehead. Anyway, almost the entire group is cold-bloodedly murdered in a self-service car wash by a psychopath dressed like Jimmy Buffett. Jamie is the only survivor, and is whisked away by Frankie to the safety of the nerds' garage. She offers to get the monster high in exchange for his heroics, but they just have sex instead. Frankie leaks blood from his forehead and crotch when aroused, but he turns out to be a real champion in the sack.

The initial revenge plot gets buried beneath endless faux-humorous set pieces, goofball romance and gory gags. Frankie rips out a man's larynx and drives a nail through his forehead. He forsakes the lovely Jamie for an inflatable sex doll, which he names "Girlfriend." Jamie rekindles their love by bringing him a studded collar, headband and a T-shirt that reads "I KICK ASS." Eventually, a guardian angel appears and the film transforms into a broken-hearted monster epic reminiscent of 1969's *The Curious Dr. Humpp*.

This was the second to last feature from legendary penniless filmmaker Milligan. A bitter, hateful man who'd crawled across every underbelly in the film industry, Milligan had helmed incredible international productions like *The Ghastly Ones* and *The Body Beneath*, only to find himself wasting away in the post-exploitation wasteland of late '80s Hollywood. Unable to find the backing or audience that his work deserved, he defiantly continued his career using any available means until his death in 1991. (ZC)

MOONWALKER

Dirs. Jerry Kramer, Jim Blashfield
& Colin Chilvers / 1988

A million ideas stitched together with a flimsy
narrative thread make for magic nevertheless.

Rule #1 for watching *Moonwalker*: Don't try to understand the plot. The movie opens with footage from a Michael Jackson concert and then cuts to shots of memorabilia from the Jackson Five days to his solo superstardom. At this point, you might think that this is just a career retrospective, but then you'd be wrong. Disjointed set pieces punctuate what is otherwise a collection of music videos from *Bad*.

The absolute highlight is a gang of 8-year-old thugs who do a perfect imitation of the video for "Bad." And, as if the sequence wasn't jaw-droppingly amazing already, after they wrap, the Baby Michael Jackson asks his assistant, "Is Bubbles in my trailer?" "Yes, sir," he replies. "What is he wearing?" "He's wearing a Prince T-shirt and red sneakers," answers the assistant. To which the incredulous Baby Mike exclaims "A *Prince* T-shirt?!" So much for loyalty.

As they exit the soundstage, they suddenly revert back to their adult selves. Unfortunately for Michael, he's just in time to catch the eye of sightseers on the studio tour bus, and soon he's being pursued by the United Nations of politically incorrect stereotypes: mobsters; sheiks; Indians; a punk with foot-tall liberty spikes; camera-wielding Japanese businessmen; a claymation grandmother/grandson duo; obese Hoveround-bound identical twins; and, for good measure, the Domino's Pizza Noid.

Of course, there are some low points, such as the sequence where MJ transmogrifies to save a little girl kidnapped by a drug-pushing Joe Pesci, and the tediously bad (no pun intended) caterwauling chant breakdown in the middle of "Smooth Criminal." Not to mention the regrettable cover of The Beatles' "Come Together" that closes the film with a major thud. Other than those stumbles, it's a truly entertaining piece of big budget self-indulgence, the likes of which had never been seen before nor will be seen again. (*LAF*)

MORONS FROM OUTER SPACE

Dir. Mike Hodges / 1985

Limeys from space kick up a mess when they land on our soil.

The term "British Comedy" makes as much sense as "Sexy Abortion," and this UK/U.S. co-production is definitely no exception. Humanoids from a distant world crash in merry England and cause panic among the populace, including nuns, Euro-hillbillies and one bleached background punk who's raging through the chaos. The government questions the aliens, who unexpectedly showcase a sub-canine intellect. They're smuggled out of the research facility and inadvertently become celebrities, drawing huge crowds that contain punks with leather jackets and neon red hair. Later, one of the aliens is tortured by being forced to listen to Iron Maiden's "Number of the Beast" album. The viewer is in similar pain. (ZC)

MOSCOW ON THE HUDSON

Dir. Paul Mazursky / 1984

America suckers another hopeful immigrant.

Before Robin Williams won an Academy Award for playing a tragic bearded professor in 1997's *Good Will Hunting*, he portrayed tragic bearded Vladimir Ivanoff: a gentle-eyed, law-abiding circus saxophonist in Cold War-era Russia. His best friend Anatoly is a politically-dissatisfied clown. The circus staff (and their KGB mouthpiece chaperones) is invited to New York City to perform, where Anatoly plans to break free of Mother Russia. As they gawk out of their bus window at the Big Apple's sights, they witness bright lights, some very impressive breakdancing and a Hassidic Jew riding a bicycle under a porn theater marquee. The dwarf clown points at a teen with a blue/gray mohawk and leather jacket. When Vladimir semi-accidentally defects, he's taken in by Bloomingdales security guard Lionel (Cleavant Derricks), who teaches him how to look mean on the subway. Vladimir sleeps on a foldout couch bed, where he watches Richard Simmons instructional exercise videos next to Lionel's grandpa. Eventually, he strikes forth on his own, falls in love and learns that America is just as soul-crushing as any Siberian wasteland.

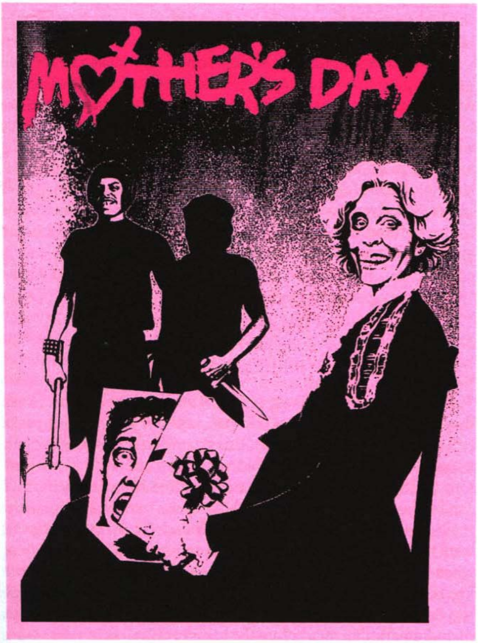
Several small performances and touches stand out: Yakov Smirnoff as Vladimir's co-worker, the great Alejandro Rey as a deeply caring immigration lawyer and even a cameo from Udo Kier. Vladimir plays a few rounds of "Q-Bert" and indirectly learns about gay cruising. At one point, he actually says, "What a country!" Moments like these (and the film's entire marketing campaign) would have the audience expect a goofball comedy, but the story is unexpectedly sincere and dramatic. Williams is very convincing and seems to have learned to speak Russian well, as evidenced in the film's extended Moscow opening. Though his work here is consistently impressive, the final act's montage of shirtless Vladimir playing a tearful saxophone number does nothing to bring about world peace. (ZC)

MOTHER'S DAY

Dir. Charles Kaufman / 1980

Three women get together for a camping trip, but things don't go so well when they run into a crazed backwoods family.

Directed by Lloyd Kaufman's brother and one of the best films Troma ever released. What separates this from other rape/revenge slasher films like *I Spit on Your Grave* and *Last House on the Left* is the strong humor throughout. There are parts that are really funny. One scene shows the psychotic inbred brothers training for a kill by practicing on potato sacks and watermelons, doing push-ups and lifting weights with their heads while their mom grades them. The orange-haired brother wears stud bracelets and camo pants. The other one wears new wave glasses and suspenders, but hates punk. While brushing his teeth, he says, "Punk sucks." His brother retorts as he combs his hair, "Disco's stupid." This argument goes on for sometime.



Be warned, the film isn't all yuks. The rape scenes are brutal and the gore is well done, causing this to be banned or heavily edited in several countries. Be prepared for the shocking ending. Shot at the same time on the same lake as the first *Friday the 13th*, and a real genuine bona fide corpse was found in the film's ramshackle house just before shooting began. (BC)

MOVING VIOLATIONS

Dir. Neal Israel / 1985

The nuttier side of traffic school.

A romp starring Bill Murray('s brother) and Stacy Keach('s brother)! This film may have stood a chance if not for John Murray's brutally irritating performance. Even when having anti-gravitational sex with Jennifer Tilly, Murray exudes nothing but self-gratifying horse-assedness. That being said, a third-rate *Police Academy* knock-off is still hilarious as far as I'm concerned, and this one centers on a ragtag assortment of offensive drivers including Fred Willard, late fat-lady icon Wendie Jo Sperber and my all-time number one favorite actress Clara Peller, aka The "Where's The Beef" Lady! One of the students is a weekend new waver who hangs out with dozens of textbook punks, proving leather jackets and bleached bangs are as crucial to madcap '80s comedy as butts are to porn. Don't blink or you'll miss award-winning actor Don Cheadle as a burger drive-thru employee. Or blink as long as you want as an old lady sits in a urinal. Though the jokes never once aim above the belt—including one zinger where grandpa takes a bowling ball in the whambo—*Moving Violations* is infinitely funnier than actual traffic school. (ZC)

MR. MIKE'S MONDO MOVIE

Dir. Michael O'Donoghue / 1979

A parody of mondo films by SNL/National Lampoon writer O'Donoghue.

This video should come with a full jug of water because this shit is dry. A church led by a preacher played by Dan Ackroyd worships Jack Lord. A cat learns to swim. Carrie Fisher says, "I wouldn't kick Ralph Nader out of bed." Ackroyd shows off his actual webbed toes. Debbie Harry states that she thinks "it's so cute when guys miss the toilet." There's excellent footage of Klaus Nomi. The Sid Vicious video for "My Way" is shown without sound, the explanation being that the company owns the rights to the Paul Anka version and they weren't allowed to use it. A joke or real? Also features cameos from Bill Murray and Gilda Radner. It's kind of funny, but largely depends on what mood/decade you're in. (BC)

MR. MOM

Dir. Stan Dragoti / 1983

Auto engineer Jack Butler (Michael Keaton) is unexpectedly laid off and his wife Caroline (Teri Garr) goes back to her advertising job, leaving Jack home with the kids. That's not how real life works!

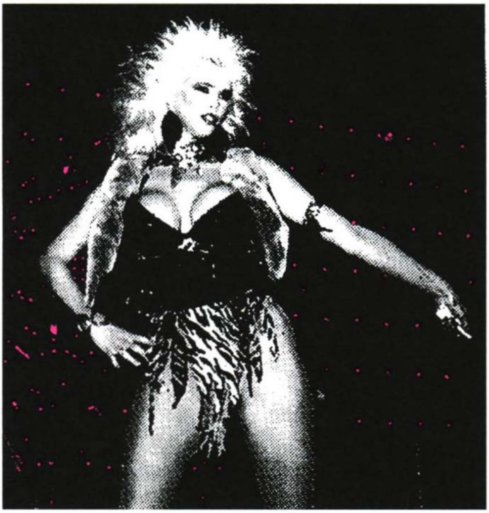
This fabulously dated movie is from ye olde 1983, when ladies were starting to get up off their couches, throwing out those bonbons and doing for themselves. Sadly, Jack does not have as much experience with housework as Caroline does with advertising. See what happens when he feeds the baby chili! See a man try to cook! Shop! Even vacuum! It's like watching a cat with a sock over its head or a woman trying to drive! The more success Caroline gains in her career, the fatter, depressed and listless Jack becomes.

When Jack has an important meeting to get his job back, a blue and red-haired punk girl with a stud collar appears at the house to baby-sit. Jack slams the door in her face and takes the kids along to his meeting. This movie is uncommonly easy to watch because of Keaton and Garr's charming presences, the non-stop cheap jokes and some '80s babies whose dangerously cute bowl cuts will force ovulation. (*BLB*)

MUGSY'S GIRLS

Dir. Kevin Bradie / 1985

The girls of Delta Pi hope to win $100,000
mud wrestling in Las Vegas.



An amusing comedy made even more worthwhile by the likes of Ruth Gordon and Eddie Deezen. Gordon is sorority housemother Mugsy, who mellows by getting totally baked and doin' college dudes. The sorority also has a pet rabbit that gets high on weed and sees fireworks. Deezen is in full hammy form as the sidekick to a first time mud-wrestling promoter. He eats pot brownies with Mugsy while driving the busload of girls to Vegas. See Deezen grow up a little as he plays with a vibrator. Rival mud-wrestling team The Nevada Nasties are pretty intimidating with their chains and dyed hair. You are not a true aficionado of cinema until you've seen Ruth Gordon mud wrestle with these tough babes. A horny camo-clad punk with a green mohawk shows up at an early wrestling scene. He spies on the sorority girls and pulls one of their dresses down. (*BC*)

MURPHY'S FAULT

Dir. Robert J. Smawley / 1988

Failed writer/former security guard
David Wayne has kind of bad luck.

If you're going to make a movie about a bunch of terrible things happening to a person, make those things interesting. It starts crazy when David gets in a bulldozer fight with three kids dressed as the devil, a priest and a superhero. The "bad" things that follow: a van gets stolen and girls are mean. That's the best they can come up with? Though there is a funny scene of David picking up shit with a beer can. Also, laugh heartily at the "hilarious" segment of David's sister, drugged up and crying in an alley, wearing only panties. Ha ha ha. She's dating a drug-addicted rock singer named Rodney. Mohawks can be seen in the crowd as the badly-dubbed Rodney jams to a Bauhaus-type song. As a clever prank, David switches Rodney's cocaine with powdered glue. For a similar style of entertainment, watch a blank wall. (*BC*)

MUTANT HUNT

Dir. Tim Kincaid / 1987

Drug-injected cyborgs get wild!

The future. Subterranean scientists discover that their experimental war robots function infinitely better when dosed with narcotics, the only side effect being that the androids have to violently kill someone every six hours. When the automatons escape, one researcher observes, "This may be the biggest mess since the Space Shuttle sex murders!" Enter mutant hunter Matt Riker, an iron-jawed man's man with a mastery of martial arts. After a crazed cyborg throws Matt's personal pleasure droid out the window, he vows to destroy the rampaging robo-jerks. Unfortunately, these narcotobots have infested the city, decapitating women, scoring their beloved dope and even battling a punk! Said combatant is played by Chris McNamee. Her towering two-tone, sidewall-poof mohawk makes her one of the most recognizable recurring movie punks, and here she looks exactly like she did in *Class of Nuke 'Em High* (minus the Hitler moustache).

Writer/director Kincaid started off in the glory days of late '70s gay porn before taking a strong shot as mid-'80s sci-fi action, with underseen crippled masterpieces like *Robot Holocaust* and *The Occultist*. These films always featured outrageously goopy effects, wooden acting and severely uncomfortable sex scenes, considering Kincaid's background in the adult industry. After joining Italian exploitation legend Enzo Castellari to co-direct Lou Ferrigno in 1989's *Sinbad* remake, he disappeared for 12 years before making his return to filmmaking with titles like *Mens Room: Bakersfield Station* and *Cop Blowers*. (*ZC*)

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE

Dir. Stephen Frears / 1985

A young, gay Pakistani runs a
British laundromat.

"Look at them. What a waste of life. They're filthy. Ignorant. They don't respect people..." An old man says this of a gang of punks before he rams one with his car. This group of rapscallions (one with a mohawk, another in beret and sunglasses and a fatty with band pins on his jacket) mill around the laundromat where their friend Johnny (a pre-hyphenated Daniel Day Lewis) works. They're really, really upset that the now-responsible bleach-haired Johnny doesn't want to share in their hijinks anymore, though it's hard to blame him when their idea of fun is breaking things. The homosexual content keeps things interesting and Day Lewis is exceptional as always as the Pakistani's lover, but this pleasant, simple little film turns to melodramatic diarrhea before the halfway point. (*BC*)

MY BEST FRIEND IS A VAMPIRE

Dir. Jimmy Huston / 1988

Red-blooded American teenager
becomes bloodsucking American immortal.

A funk-rock intro theme by Stephen Dorff Sr. is probably the most terrifying aspect of this enjoyable by-the-numbers '80s horror-comedy. The picture opens with lead teen Jeremy enduring a nightmare in which a nun castrates him with garden shears. Though desirable cheerleader Candy Andrews is "hot for his tailpipe," Jeremy can't get his mind off rigid band nerd Darla Blake. At his grocery job, he takes a delivery to an abandoned mansion where a scrawny vampiress lays down some unsuccessful seductive moves. When he relates the story to horndog friend Ralph (whose license plate reads "BVR HUNT"), the hormonal pal convinces Jeremy to "go for it." Casting aside his fundamental gentlemanliness, he finds himself back at the mansion at midnight only to be interrupted by vampire hunter Prof. Leo McCarthy (David Warner). Jeremy barely escapes as the professor kills the vamp and dynamites her home. Back home, Jeremy notices his body going through strange changes, and that a lanky man is following him. The stranger is Modoc, a well-intentioned vampiric social worker played by Rene Auberjonois (best known as stuffy Clayton from TV's *Benson*). Other casting highlights include Kathy Bates as Darla's mom and an unusually entertaining token fat guy who provides the most gratuitous fart joke you'll see this decade. Anyway, Modoc fills Jeremy in on the undead basics before shapeshifting into a wolf. Soon Jeremy's chasing Darla, the professor's chasing Jeremy and Ralph's chasing every girl in school. After Jeremy "comes out of the coffin" to his buddy, the two of them head off to local punk bar Bad Blood, where mohawked grown-ups take in some distorted synthesized polka courtesy of three tousle-haired LA "rockers." Liberty spikes and dog collars are everywhere, prompting the pursuing Professor McCarthy to say, "My God...it's a satanic cult!" Jeremy attempts to slow the vampire hunter by casting a love spell on a red leather new waver but things go awry, resulting in a wall-busting brawl between a 50-year-old mustachioed punk and the aforementioned gassy chubster. (*ZC*)

MY CHAUFFEUR

Dir. David Beaird / 1986

An irrepressible young driver
revolutionizes the luxury car business.

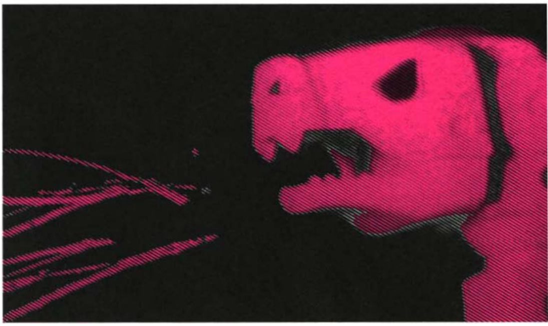
Valley Girl's Deborah Foreman is Casey, a sassed-up dishwasher who's mysteriously hired by Hollywood's most prestigious limousine service. Her elderly male colleagues are angered by the development, and her first day on the job is fraught with danger as she's assigned to drive for sex-obsessed manimalistic punk star Animal. This red-coiffed cockney reject gets sidetracked stealing old ladies' panties, but Casey manages to get him to his adoring crowd of spiked disciples just in the nick of time. Her subsequent clients are equally challenging, including a high-powered uptight businessman who ends up naked in a park, chasing a baby carriage. This very same wang-flopping maniac turns out to be her employer's son, and she soon finds herself engaged in an unlikely romance. Uneven, boneheaded and thoroughly entertaining, this underseen teen comedy boasts the most charming performance of Foreman's career. Penn & Teller make their feature debut as a huckster and a breakdancing sheik, respectively. (*ZC*)

MY DEGENERATION

Dir. Jon Moritsugu / 1989

Childhood rock ambitions lead to adult punk failures.

Dedicated scum auteur Moritsugu's first feature. In this gutter-scented meat opera, Amanda Jones plays the dynamic Amanda Jones, a teenybopper fantasizing about big time fame. A few years later, she's living the dream as the frontwoman of LA punk trio Bunny Luv. Their rapid ascension to fame is documented by narration from a cattle skull. Bunny Luv wins the high school Battle of the Bands, and is rewarded with their big break, courtesy a talent scout representing the American Beef Institute. The organization changes the band's name to the more marketable (and "meaty") Fetish. The remodeled musicians are practically enslaved by the overlord company, taught how to dress and what to say, and kept on a backbreaking practice schedule.



With their image perfected, the girls set off on a cross-country meat-promoting tour. Their debut album, "Meat is Love...Here's FETI$H," garners heavy media attention, but their compromised integrity renders success bittersweet. Amanda longs to spend her days at home with her boyfriend, a severed pig head named Livingston. Her bandmates succumb to celebrity self-obsession, and the ugliness of rock 'n' roll victory inevitably tarnishes everyone's lives.

The plot of the film is difficult to extract through the flickering stock footage of slaughterhouses, not to mention Moritsugu's trademarked absent production value and disdain for pacing, but its similarities to films like *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls* earn it a place in the Musicians-with-Spent-Dreams category. Soundtrack by Vomit Launch, Poison 13, Government Issue, Bongwater and Halo of Flies. (*ZC*)

MY MAN ADAM

Dir. Roger L. Simon / 1985

The tender and very racist tale of a young white chump emotionally supported by an adventurous stereotype.

This seemingly innocent high school comedy is possibly the most offensive cinematic strike against black Americans since *Birth of a Nation.* The opening voiceover from Leroy Avenue Williams: "Help a nigger out... I'm 26 and still in this high school. I musta been shipped here straight from Africa." Eeaagh. Leroy lives in a van, sells stolen goods and is portrayed as basically illiterate. Meanwhile, nice-guy geek Adam dreams big as he delivers squid pizza in a rabbit costume for a wildly successful gourmet restaurant owned by his father (*SCTV*'s Dave Thomas). Overall, *My Man Adam* is an updated version of the Danny Kaye classic *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* with some questionable "modern" humor thrown in. Adam's dad shoots a pesky neighbor with a laser gun, a hairy male stripper is spanked by a dozen 80-year-old women and an African-American nerd named Donald (Larry B. Scott from *Revenge of the Nerds*) runs for student body president. The campaign road is rugged and a punk joins other students in studying a defaced election poster. Donald's PR manager convinces him to make his assembly speech as Donald the Rapping Rabbit. He recites the following:

"I'm black. I'm Latino.
I'm anything you like.
I'm white. I'm a brother.
I will even be a dyke."

Despite his role's masochistically derisive nature, Charlie Barnett (*D.C. Cab*) is pretty damn entertaining as Leroy. Sadly, his career would be cut short by AIDS at the age of 42. (*ZC*)

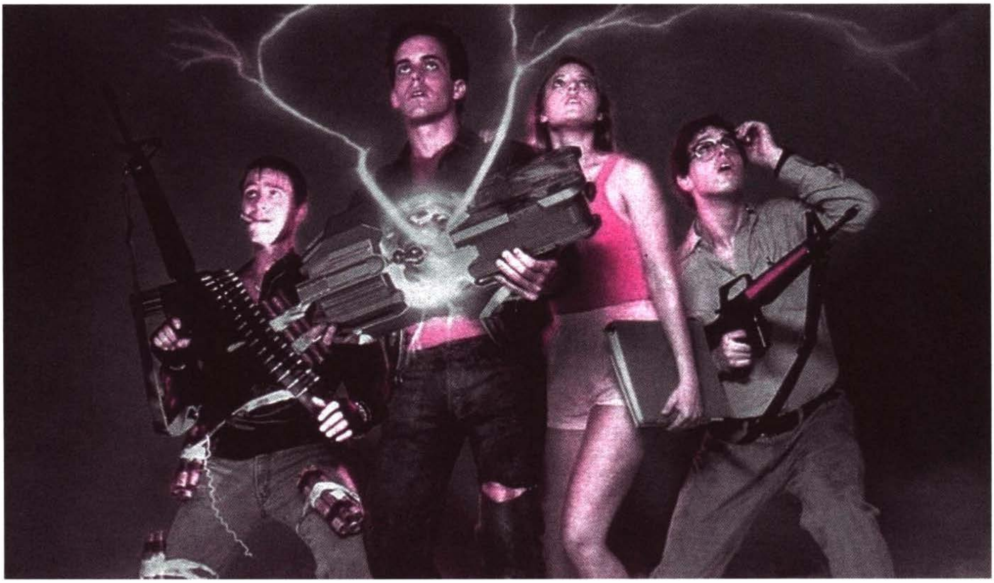
MY SCIENCE PROJECT

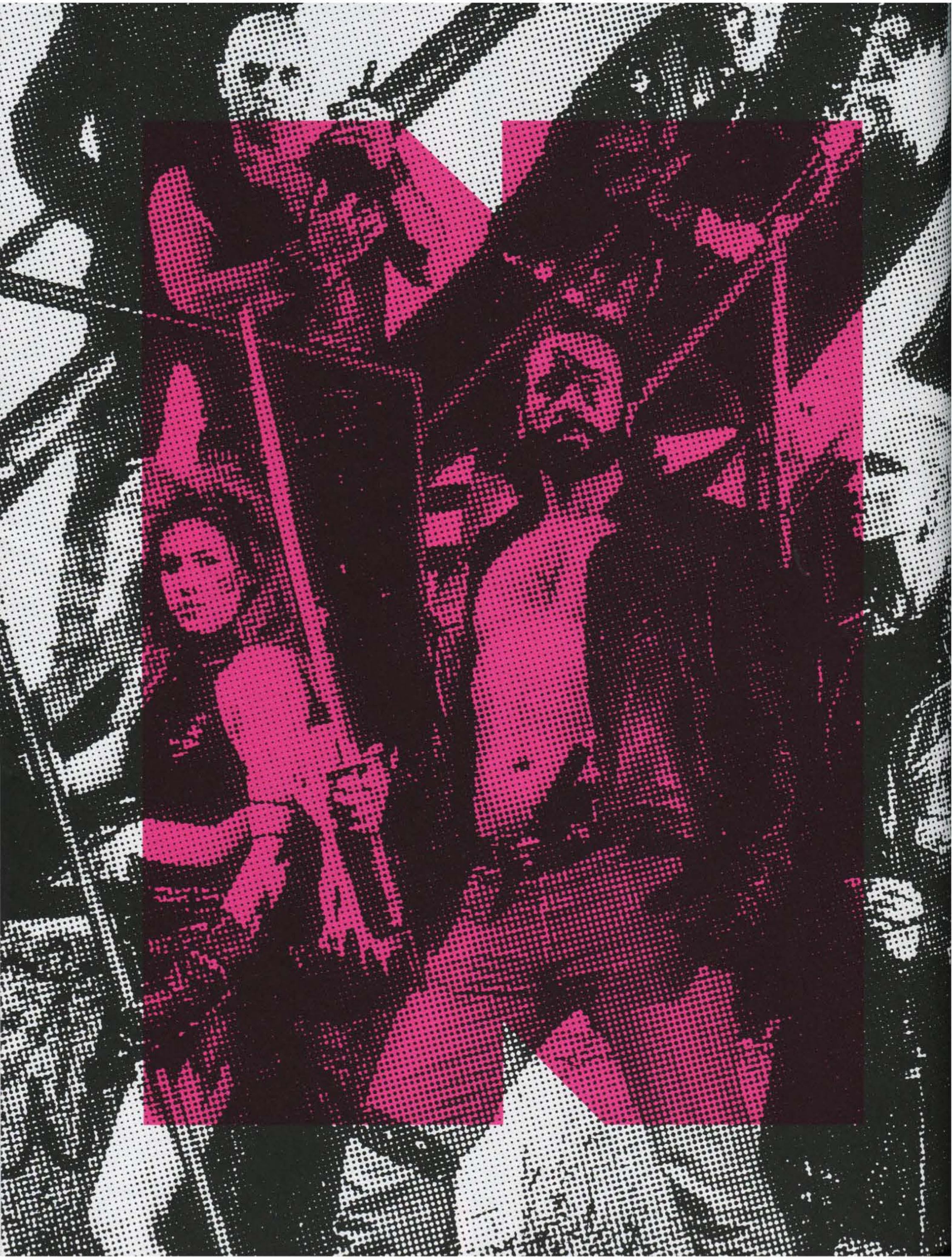
Dir. Jonathan Betuel / 1985

Extraterrestrial technology causes a rumpus on campus.

Rural high school gearhead Michael (John Stockwell) must devise a science project in order to graduate. Immediately after being dumped, he's hassled by nerd admirer Ellie (Danielle von Zerneck) as a red-fauxhawked new waver passes in the background. Ellie drags Michael out on their first "date," which brings them to a secluded military wreckage yard. There, Michael stumbles upon the remains of a confiscated alien spacecraft stored in a musty subterranean bunker. The ship's engine absorbs any energy it encounters, leaving the teens' car dead at the roadside. Michael calls on best friend Vince (Fisher Stevens), a greasy ex-Brooklynite with a Cyndi Lauper-inspired girlfriend and Christmas lights adorning the interior of his custom hot rod. Eventually, the alien engine creates a vortex that transports people and creatures from every earthly era, drawing Neanderthals, Nazis and post-apocalyptic mutants into the high school hallways.

Dennis Hopper appears as a drug-enlightened teacher, and in one scene wears his actual costume from *Easy Rider*. Stevens' next project would bring him more fame (if less visual recognizability) as East Indian robotics genius Ben in the *Short Circuit* movies. Director Betuel wouldn't be so lucky; though he succeeded as screenwriter for the amazing *The Last Starfighter*, his directorial honor would be lethally compromised by 1995's direct-to-video Whoopi Goldberg fatality *Theodore Rex*. (*ZC*)





THE NAKED CAGE

Dir. Paul Nicholas / 1986

Vengeance and torn clothing behind bars.

German expatriate Nicholas' thematic follow-up to the ultra-successful *Chained Heat* is every bit as trashy as its predecessor and borrows many of its most memorable motifs. This time around, the obligatory horny warden is female and the prison's inexplicably segregated all-black cellblock residents practice their pop-n-lock moves rather than stage a daring escape. The yard is ruled by a hulking, masculine inmate who hits up her peers for protection money; one of these bullied lifers is a glampunk prisoner with a striped, teased mane. Though both the cast and ambience are less powerful than in the director's previous incarceration opera, there are some bold additions here including futuristic neon set design and a couple 70-something-year-old inmates, all refreshing rarities in films of this type. (*ZC*)

THE NAKED GUN

Dir. David Zucker / 1988

Zany hammin' from a master of the genre.

Leslie Nielsen is an unstoppable force of pure comedy. Only, he and the rest of the world didn't realize it until 1980's *Airplane!*, when he was already 54 years old. Since that time, the white-topped funnyman has made up for lost time, slinging goofball gags at every opportunity. Here, he reprises his square-jawed everyman hero Lt. Frank Drebin from the hilarious but doomed Zucker/Abrahams/Zucker *Police Squad* TV series.

The film opens in the Far East, where a secret gathering of international villains (including Idi Amin, Yasser Arafat, Muammar al-Gaddafi and... Mikhail Gorbachev??) have gathered to plot the destruction of the United States. But, before their terrorist designs get underway, Frank intervenes with some red-blooded American justice. After a solid Three Stooges eye gouge, he punches Ruhollah Khomeini in the gut so hard that his turban goes flying, revealing a red mohawk. The very next scene involves the wacky antics of an actor named O.J. Simpson. Ricardo Montalban appears as a billionaire crime lord plotting to kill the queen of England. Lawrence Tierney, Priscilla Presley, George Kennedy and Reggie Jackson are among the familiar faces that round out the cast. More importantly, "Weird Al" Yankovic is in it. (*ZC*)

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S EUROPEAN VACATION

Dir. Amy Heckerling / 1985

The Griswolds win a family vacation to Europe.

This starts strong with some good Chevy Chase bits, but gets weighed down halfway through by the tiresome plot. There are punks and new wavers galore in son Rusty's dream sequence. Later, Clark (Chase) and his son walk down a street of punks. Rusty points at one with a mohawk:

"That's it. That's it. That's the way I want my hair cut."

"No, Russ. You don't want to look like a rooster, do you?'

The topless gymnastics show is funny. There's also a hilarious scene of Clark ruining a traditional German dance by accidentally punching the other dancers out. John Astin is amusing as a pederast game show host. (*BC*)

NATURAL BORN KILLERS

Dir. Oliver Stone / 1994

Unfortunately, the person who lives to tell the tale of Mickey and Mallory Knox is you.

Once upon a time, Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis were plucked from their respective Special Education classes and allowed to star in a film. The result is a free-for-all of MTV editing and a muddled metacriticism of postmodern America's obsession with media and violence. Oh, and in one fantasy flashback sequence, Juliette Lewis plays a punk who likes John Lee Hooker, which is pretty indicative of how badly this movie gets it all wrong. (*LAF*)

NECROPOLIS

Dir. Bruce Hickey / 1987

A reincarnated witch aims to raise the demons of hell.

New Amsterdam: 1686. An albino woman in black spandex achieves eternal life by doing aerobics in front of a pentagram. 300 years later, she rips through the streets of Manhattan atop a red motorcycle; her spiked platinum hair and studded gauntlets whistling in the wind as she hunts for The Devil's Ring. After failing to entrap a Catholic priest, she retires to her apartment to try out some seductive new wave dance moves. Across the city, a DJ interviews a teenage boy, who speaks frankly about his trick-turning past: "I'm no fag...I was just strung out." The albino then enters him telepathically and makes him say a swear word.

After raising some zombies in a basement, this wayward lady seduces a Danzig doppelgänger away from his poodlepunk girlfriend, only to fatally suck some mucus from his forehead. She calls a congregation of her undead followers and grows four extra nipples to feed them family-style. It's moments like this that make an otherwise unspectacular mess grind its heels into your memory.

The fancy-stepping witch (LeeAnne Baker) has false breasts but real conviction. While researching for this review, I was surprised/depressed to learn that I'd accidentally seen every title in her filmography. (*ZC*)

NEIGHBORS

Dir. John G. Avildsen / 1981

Mismatched couples stage a small-scale war
in their cul-de-sac.

Though they were still at the apex of their comedic talents, neither Dan Aykroyd nor John Belushi could inject a single chuckle into this abomination. Belushi plays against type—and his natural talents—as businessman Earl Keese, a straight-laced pud in an anemic marriage whose life is ruined when maniacs Vic and Ramona (Aykroyd and Cathy Moriarty) buy the house next door. Within minutes of their U-Haul's arrival, Earl finds himself entrenched in fistfights, cat-and-mouse flirtation and shotgun blasts, all accompanied by a crushingly zany score from the otherwise solid Bill Conti. Things get even more jumbled when the Keeses' daughter Elaine arrives in all her leather punk finery, brashly displaying a pair of edible underwear while blasting Dead Kennedys from a boombox. Later, a poster for Lech Kowalski's *D.O.A.* can be seen hanging on her bedroom door. At the film's climax, she dyes her hair Christmas colors and runs off with a Cro-Magnon truck driver.

Belushi had long insisted that he wanted legendary LA group Fear to provide a considerable portion of the soundtrack, but this plan was curtailed by someone at the top and Conti's milquetoast score filled the gap. Hard to believe the same director helmed a masterpiece like *Rocky* just a few years earlier. In theory, glowing dogs and swampland hijinks would make for strong entertainment, but *Neighbors* limps along like a high school play directed by a recently divorced PE teacher. (*ZC*)

NEON MANIACS

Dir. Joseph Mangine / 1986

A hive of disfigured mutants emerges from beneath
the Golden Gate Bridge to kill at will.

This film is an incredibly senseless and bizarre excuse for teen slaughter, which is fine with me. No origin or explanation is given for the creatures, each of which is a misshapen variation on a basic theme: there's a hirsute Neanderthal, a gruesome surgeon, a lumbering samurai, etc. There's even a leather daddy biker beast who chain-drags a mohawked teen behind his cycle when the monsters invade the whitest high school Battle of the Bands in San Francisco history.

The neon maniacs seem to share a common mind, are allergic to water and have highlighter-green blood. Shuffling among their ranks is a dwarven cycloptic dinosaur that kills with a metal hook. Early in the film, a van packed with hair-gelled jock meatbags roll by a rock club entrance clustered with well-behaved new wavers. One of the all-Americans rolls down the window and yells, "PUNK ASSHOLES!" Within ten minutes, he's been justifiably murdered by the film's titular wildmen. Overall, this forgotten shard of '80s youth damage is aimless, arguably-inspired bullshit that was released in the Philippines as *Evil Dead Warriors* for absolutely no goddamn reason. (*ZC*)

NEUROSIA – 50 YEARS OF PERVERSION

Dir. Rosa von Praunheim / 1995

After the public murder of a flamboyant German filmmaker
(who happens to bear the same name as this movie's director),
a reporter sifts for clues.

Von Praunheim is assassinated in front of an adoring audience, his corpse vanishing the second it hits the stage. An uptight newswoman investigates his home, finding used condoms, jars of urine and von Praunheim's elderly mother. Digging through his journals, the reporter maps out a personal and artistic history of her subject which translates to a career-spanning chronicle of his work, including actual paintings, photography and films (all of which contain no shortage of penises). She speaks with former collaborators and associates, including a bald hairstylist ex-boyfriend with multiple piercings and tattoos. This narrative/documentary chronologically dissects von Praunheim's career, from its confrontational beginnings to his fearless, influential '70s output that brought him to New York. The reporter heads there as well, scavenging bathhouses and a public park where two morose street punks look on.

Neurosia takes an unconventional stab at its faux-deceased subject/creator, simultaneously self-indulgent and self-deprecating. Its conservative female central character is constantly disgusted by the filmmaker's decadent homosexual lifestyle. In the end, she uncovers a greater truth that involves punk transvestite boating enthusiasts. Budget-cinema legend Mike Kuchar handles much of the camerawork. (ZC)

NEVER MIND THE SEX PISTOLS, HERE'S THE BOLLOCKS

Dirs. Cynthia Gianelli & Paul Allen Newell / 1978

A grainy, front-row investigation of
the West Coast punk scene.

Beyond chronicling the punk explosion of the late '70s, this documentary has a second mission: to settle the great chicken-or-the-egg argument over punk's UK vs. NYC origins. Though this contested topic is as resolvable as a holy war, the material at hand is entertaining, and sure to stir up feelings of nationalist punk ownership on both sides of the Atlantic.

Things start off with a minimum of international rivalry. The Weirdos' drummer Nickey Beat states that the New Music is admittedly violent, but all in good fun. The Dead Boys perform, singer Stiv Bators strangling a plastic flamingo with the mic cord. Sire Records vice president John Montgomery says, "The more bands that are considered new wave rather than punk, the better for the movement." The Masque owner Brendan Mullen theorizes that pogoing is a flirtation with danger.

Mullen's venue was a well-documented epicenter of the LA scene, and San Francisco's The Avengers are featured playing there to an electrified audience. It's after this footage that Mullen joins the Talking Heads' Chris Frantz in the opinion that punk rock was an American invention that was adopted and expanded—not invented—by UK groups. This theory becomes a recurring focus for the film, Nickey Beat pondering the question while standing in front of an American flag.

The Weirdos and the Screamers jolt the Masque crowd, and Mullen talks about spectators who visit the club to ogle the daredevilishly fashionable regulars rather than the bands. The public's misconception of punk's inherent violence is addressed and dismissed. The Bags perform for a tremendous number of people at The Troubador, and writhing Ohio rockers the Rubber City Rebels menace the Whisky audience. Though the film was made in 1978, band members, industry employees and even retail record store managers assess the already imminent stagnation of the scene while maintaining hope that it'll weather overexposure and its own limitations. (ZC)

NEVER TOO YOUNG TO DIE

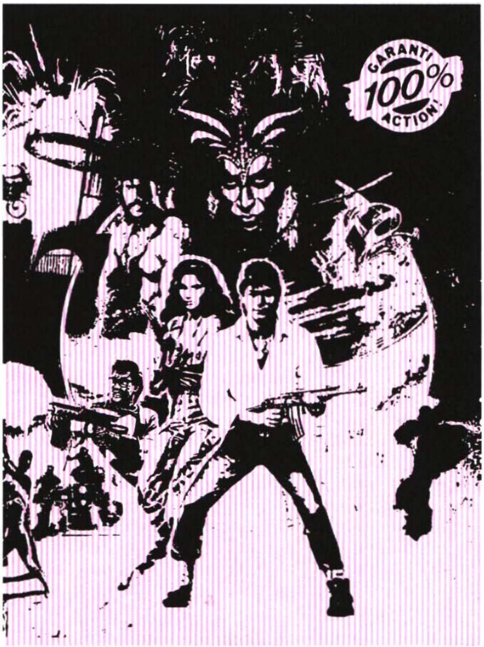
Dir. Gil Bettman / 1986

A teenage gymnast teams up with his dead father's girlfriend
to save the world from an army of punks led by
a hermaphroditic supervillain.

As stated before, the amount of research for this book was immense. We squared off against countless films in every genre: beach comedies, shot-on-video ghost stories, lesbian dramas, skateboarding documentaries and on and on. At the time of this writing, I've reviewed several hundred movies and filtered through thousands more.

Nothing else matters now that I've seen *Never Too Young to Die*.

This crippled epic is a flooring example of defiantly defective action filmmaking. Not only does it require nothing from its audience, actors or crew, but it practically begs you to punch a hole in your skull, remove your brain and set it on fire in a pure celebration of beautiful, unbridled 12-year-old adrenaline. Every creative standard is compromised in the name of undiluted entertainment. *Never Too Young to Die*, I want you inside me.



But enough mush, let's talk content. The people behind this project should be machine-gunned with medals commending their unintentional brilliance. I was hooked within seconds... five seconds to be exact; the exact length of time the film runs before we see our first punks. Herds of them, bearing torches, lumbering and skirmishing on a dirt plateau overlooking an enormous concrete dam. They interrupt their primal antics to receive an address from Kiss bassist Gene Simmons in drag, blue feather boa and all. Simmons is he-she Velvet Von Ragnar, a criminal mastermind bent on using a stolen computer disc (here repeatedly referred to as a "Ram-K") to poison America's water supply with toxic waste. His followers chant, "The Finger! The Finger!" until Ragnar uses a long sharpened press-on nail to impale a lingerie-clad traitor before erupting into some right juicy villainous cackling.

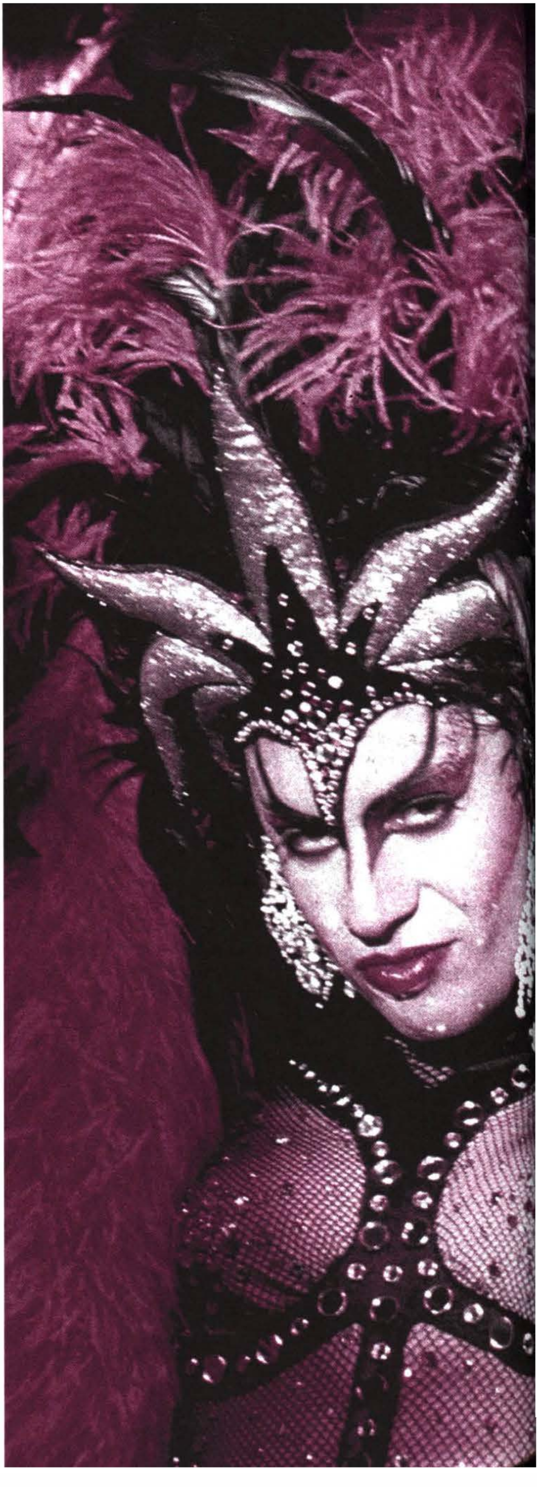
Enter Ragnar's soon-to-be nemesis: Lance Stargrove (John Stamos). He's a master aerobics enthusiast and high school tech wiz, though the latter is largely made possible by his token '80s Asian science-geek buddy Cliff (Peter Kwong, best remembered as one of the three elementals in *Big Trouble in Little China*). Cliff supplies his acrobatic pal with an endless array of futuristic gizmos, and also gives him a great deal of love and support, including many reassuring pats and rubs and loudly declared praises of Lance's general majesty.

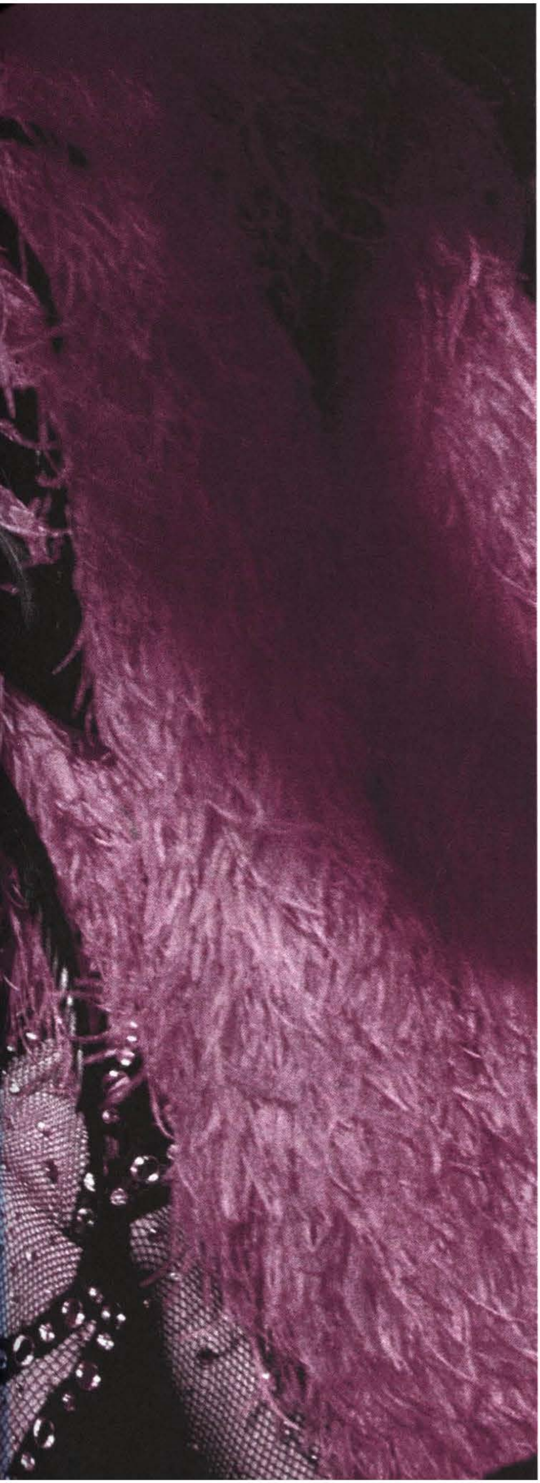
The elder Stargrove (former 007 George Lazenby) is an absentee father and (secretly) a dashing international spy. His ongoing battle to thwart Ragnar's schemes leads to a roaring confrontation with the seemingly inexhaustible punk battalion. Grenades, automatic weapons, martial arts...nothing depletes the ranks of technicolored lowlifes. Artillery spent, the aged agent is captured just after sending a new wave mannequin plummeting to its doom.

Soon, the burden of defending the earth from cross-dressing maniacs falls into Lance's hands. He also inherits his father's secret farm retreat, complete with thoroughbred horses, a secret computer bunker filled with progressive weaponry, and his pop's slinky partner Danja (played by former Prince protégée and future Christian evangelist Vanity). Introductions are cut short when two of Ragnar's subhumans show up in a skull-adorned dune buggy and blow up the barn. It's with the arrival of these characters—especially the barbarian-chic man-megalith Pyramid (Ed Brock)—that the film ascends from engagingly inept to epically deranged. As Pyramid's wolfskin boot strides into frame, *Never Too Young to Die* enters a previously untapped dimension that rewrites the laws of Video Age adventure films. Though it would be his only feature role, Brock's waxed, oiled torso and dripping perm ignite with action figure intensity as he takes command of the scene that heralds an entire film's spiral into impossibility.

Pyramid and other questionably-tough tough guys hang out at biker club The Incinerator, where drunken rogues pop indoor wheelies on motorcycles adorned with iron unicorn heads. Punks nod hypnotically to live glamrock acts while guzzling cocktails of beer and motor oil. Lance decides to investigate, sticking out like a sore thumb but earning the easy affections of a transvestite waitress who offers him "a free lube job." Turns out The Incinerator's headlining act is Ragnar him/herself, who struts out onstage in an ill-fitting pink showgirl ensemble to perform a song about the fondling of genitals. The crowd goes wild...especially an enthusiastic bespectacled stepmom in a Mickey Mouse sweatshirt. Things heat up backstage, and watching 1986's chubby Gene Simmons attempt to seduce a young, hopeful John Stamos is among the most significantly uncomfortable moments on film.

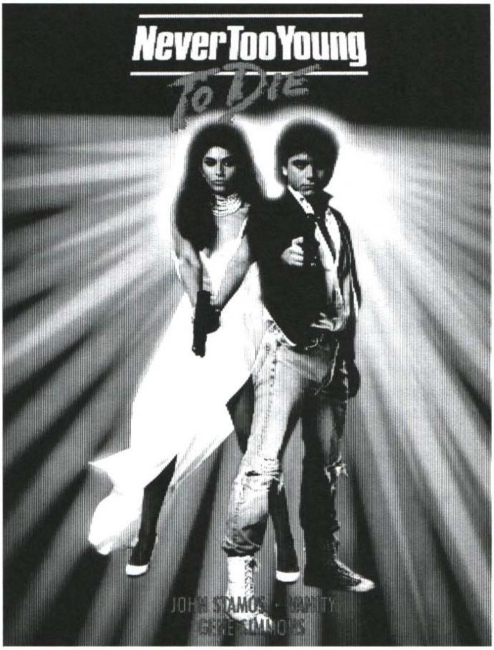
The delirium doesn't end. Back at the spy farm, Lance is severely beaten by a couple halfwit post-apocalyptic scumbags who bash his skull against the sink while singing a song about "washing face." After giving them the patented Stargrove treatment, he gnaws several pieces of fruit while watching Danja lounge seductively in a tasseled bikini. After getting his nipples chewed by his dead dad's girlfriend, Lance is ready for the final showdown in Ragnar's punk battlepit. As the gladiator match begins, the mad(wo)man addresses his lowlife legions with a speech so brilliantly, blindingly retarded that it's necessary to recount it here in its entirety:





"Better-sy, better-sy, you slugs! Shit on modesty! Gorge it back! A toast to none other than *moi!* Savor your master—and mistress—of this shit heap, you worms! I'm gold...GOLD! All the gut joy. ORGASM, you turdy revelers! Piss on the world! Swill up! And now, boys and girls, some entertainment!"

My fingers would start to bleed before I could type out a fraction of the infinite joys of the script, so I'll stop here. But it's not just the dialogue; every character, every bizarre senseless motivation, every cockeyed development seems transmitted from the center of the sun.



It's hard to determine how it all happened. Director Bettman had worked primarily on TV and only made one other feature, the decidedly tame *Crystal Heart*. Though writer Steven Paul already held the *Guinness Book of Worlds Records* slot for youngest professional film producer, nothing else in his history even hints at this bold level of blinding crud. For the most part, the actors are unaware of *Never Too Young to Die's* greatness, though Stamos seems to already be resigned to his direct-to-video destiny. Vanity might as well be playing her role at gunpoint. The film came at a rough time in her career, preceding (or initiating) a pretty steep downhill slide from "better" productions like *The Last Dragon*, and also following her divorce from Prince's musical ranks, allegedly after she refused to use the stage name "Vagina" at his insistence. Minor bits from Lazenby and Robert "Freddy Krueger" Englund show equally weak effort, but none of that matters thanks to one man...

I hereby demand that a 200-foot-tall Oscar be given to Simmons for his performance as the unhinged Ragnar. His earnest achievement ranks as one of the all-time best work from any actor. Sure, that's a bold statement, but until I see Laurence Olivier in a corset and feathered headpiece condemn the world to annihilation, I'm sticking to it. (*ZC*)

GIL BETTMAN

Director – *NEVER TOO YOUNG TO DIE*

DAM: When they brought the project to you, producer Steven Paul was intent on making a totally straight-faced action film?

GB: His intention was to create his own *James Bond* franchise: Lance Stargrove, Son of Bond. And then he would make a lot of money. You know, Steven Paul and his brother Stuart, they've created a whole swath of bad movies. They're responsible for *Baby Geniuses*. Steven is what I call a shoe salesman who thinks he's a producer. If you took the title page off of *Debbie Does Dallas* and *Citizen Kane* and asked him to read both scripts he'd say, "Oh, they're both pretty good." He has no gut. He has no original ideas. His only idea is, "OK...we've got a lot of movies out right now about babies who talk, so I can make money if I make one." That's the way his thinking is. So that's the way he was thinking about this movie, which was, "Oh, well, *Bond* movies are making money. I like *Bond* movies. So I'm gonna make my own *Bond* franchise."

So he and Stuart wrote the first couple drafts of the script, and then at least he had the sense to give it to Lorenzo Semple to do a rewrite, and then Semple made Ragnar a hermaphrodite. Steven couldn't have thought that up in a million years. So when I got the script, I don't think any of the punk and drug stuff had been added. I just wanted to think of Ragnar and his followers as kind of an underground Jim Jones culture, where they were all kind of drugged out and worshipped their leader and were just a bunch of people crazed out of their skulls and would do anything he said. But to such a large extent that it was funny.

Who ended up designing them? The way they look is so far removed from reality, like even more than *The Road Warrior*, but there's been no apocalypse. They're crazy.

Yeah. That was me: I was driving that as far as I could, and I just wish we'd had more money to put into their camp and their wardrobe. I mean, we never had enough makeup people to really do their makeup right.

As for as the people you were working with, were they extras or actual punks?

Those were real punks—a lot of them—real LA street punks that came with their own spiked hair and all. There was a woman who did casting, and they were not union extras. She came from the world of rock videos. And once we got a hold of a couple of punks, they brought more.

When everything was coming together, were the three leads already attached to the film?

Absolutely, yeah. John Stamos, Gene Simmons and Vanity were attached when I started. I don't think Stamos was the right guy. I really wanted somebody much edgier. John's a nice guy and he's good in certain roles. I would have liked somebody like Aidan Quinn, somebody with some fire, somebody with some madness. Stamos was kind of a puppy. I wanted somebody who had a little snarl in him.

I think they had another guy hired to direct it before me. That was my second film; I came out of episodic TV and I did a couple of rock videos that involved car stunts, like the Chicago "Stay the Night" video. When I came in, I'd done *Knight Rider* and *B.J. and the Bear*. So I knew car stunts, and I'm actually pretty proud of the stunts in *Never Too Young to Die*, now that I think about it. We had a small budget.

What was it like working with Gene Simmons? Did he really get into his feminine character or did that take some prodding?

Simmons was brilliant casting. I don't think there's another human being walking the planet that could've played that role better than him. And Gene is so smart. It's all business with him. He didn't do much acting after this—and I'm sure he stopped because it wasn't gonna make him enough money. Nothing happens to Gene; Gene makes everything happen. He'd played a villain in the movie he did before *Never Too Young to Die* called *Runaway*. He totally was with the idea of camping it up as much as he could and having fun with it. Unfortunately, he didn't come to the set knowing his lines. Like the scene in the nightclub where he's doing his performance where he sings—

Oh yeah, that reminds me...what was the nightclub called?

"The Incinerator."

Now that I'm talking about it, I remember that a lot of the extras who were in there were LA punks too. And there was a band that was on before him, and they were all male cross-dressers; it was Ragnar's backup band. They were the real thing. They were real cross-dressers and they were good. But Gene didn't know his lines for that song that he did.

I think Gene was working simultaneously on a television show in Seattle, like an episode of some series. He flew in and he had no sleep. He actually did that twice to me: he did it that day when he had that performance and he did it the night we shot the opening scene where he kills the girl by sticking a finger in her neck.

There's one scene where he does this huge speech—it almost seems like stream-of-consciousness—where he's announcing that he's captured the heroes. And he just says the most insane stuff. I mean, it seems scripted, but like it's from another planet.

That was the exterior day stuff at their hangout, right? Those days he came to the set knowing his stuff, he was sharp.

But where did that speech come from? Was that spoken just as it was written?

I'm not sure exactly, but I think I wrote that with a friend of mine.

Because it's really one of the most unbelievable stretches of dialogue in any movie.

Can you say some of it back to me? I'd recognize it if I wrote it.

He yells, "Orgasm, my turdy revelers!"

Yeah. I wrote that.

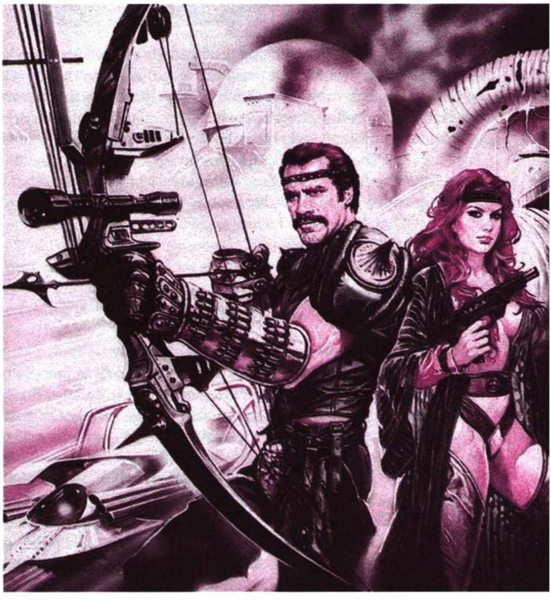
THE NEW BARBARIANS

Dir. Enzo Castellari / 1982

In a post-apocalyptic future, a cruel all-male gang is bent on destroying the remnants of humanity. It's up to a scruffy loner and his former rival to protect a small community of survivors.

While it may seem like a daunting task to keep the numerous early '80s Italian post-apocalyptic *Road Warrior* rip-offs straight, just remember ass-rape and plastic domes and you'll be on your way to recalling *The New Barbarians*. It's a hard genre to be particularly critical of...I mean, where do you start? Besides, like a lot of Italian exploitation cinema, the post-nuke knock-offs manage to be guilty pleasures despite their extremely derivative origins and schlockingly low budgets. Castellari's film works in some surreal plot details, crazy hairdos, goofy cartoon sound effects and lots of said plastic domes. Plus it shamelessly borrows entire scenes from notable Spaghetti Western films like *A Fistful of Dollars* and *Keoma* (also directed by Castellari), making for a messy but tasty trash cinema smorgasbord.

The most visually striking moment of *The New Barbarians* occurs in the first few minutes. The credit sequence features a Toho-style miniature city being "nuked" to the groovy disco beat of Claudio (Goblin) Simonetti. Then the camera pans over a quarry-like wasteland scattered with rusty vehicles and human remains, including a skeleton in the most perplexing helmeted space suit I've ever seen. For some reason, the suit has two clear plastic breast domes. I guess it's a female suit with impractical built-in peek-a-boo titbowls, but for the life of me I can't figure out why anyone except some horny Italian costume designer or a space age burlesque dancer would want such an outfit. Sad to say, we never get to see any living people prancing around in this thing. We are then introduced to The Templars, an all-male all-gay gang bent on exterminating humanity. These self-appointed "ministers of revenge" drive around in space-age golf carts, dune buggies and motorcycles, dismembering people with concealed buzzsaws and shooting their futuristic flamethrowers at any survivors they encounter. The boss, named One (George Eastman), is so damn mean he tears a Bible in half! The punkest component of this movie is the Templar with a huge purple mohawk/ponytail combo. He gets killed by the heroic Scorpion (Giancarlo Prete, credited in the U.S. as Timothy Brent) about halfway through. Scorpion is then ritualistically violated in the pooper by One in front of the rest of the guys. In order to protect a small group of survivors (that include an annoying kid and a "foxy" lady with inch-thick mascara) and, of course, avenge the unwanted anal intrusion, Scorpion enlists the help of old rival Nadir (Fred Williamson). Nadir shoots people with arrows that make their heads blow up. Scorpion has a clear plastic bulletproof vest that isn't as cool, but it does get the job done. Eventually, the unstoppable team of Scorp and Nad halt The Templars' sinister gay agenda, thus protecting the future for heterosexuals everywhere. *(SH)*



NEW WAVE HOOKERS

Dir. Gregory Dark / 1985

Two guys fantasize about those sexually-charged new wavers.

Possibly the most famous adult jam of the '80s and certainly the most entertaining, thanks to the off-the-wall moments not usually found in a sex film. A dog-collared Jamie Gillis wears a skinny tie over a T-shirt with an anarchy symbol on it. For no apparent reason, he talks with a Japanese accent. His business partner is former Sid & Marty Krofft star John-Anthony Bailey, who wears a yellow Devo-style jumpsuit. They share an office with a nude man who acts like a dog. The yellow-clad man has some views on the new wave scene: "Man, I think these bitches is crazy. They's out there, giving out that pussy for free all to hear some bullshit music. Now, what the hell does that new wave music got that black music doesn't has? You know what I think? I think these bitches be from another planet and that that new wave music is like they sex drug." Ginger Lynn wears stud bracelets and does the things that the ladies do in these movies. Peter North also sports a stud bracelet, but on his thang.

The women in this film never look convincingly new wave, until the last scene when girls with tattered shirts and large hairstyles get loved on a rotating table. Traci Lords was originally in the film as the devil, but has forever been cut from all home-video versions due to some kinda silly statutory business. Soundtrack by punk legends The Plugz and The Sockets. Look for graffiti that reads "CAT'S ASS" on the office wall. The next three installments in this series would feature several hookers but no new wave. (BC)

NEW WAVE HOOKERS 5

Dir. Michael Ninn / 1997

Computer art bullshit where people do it to
each other in the future, I guess.

Who thinks this is sexy? Is it even supposed to *be* sexy? Truly nasty exploits abound, scenes switching from being clinical to just plain weird. One example is the group "love" scene where the men dress as racist depictions of Japanese people. Strangely, only the first movie in this series had anything to do with punk or new wave. The sequels feature people with no musical affiliation. This one only counts due to Jamie Gillis returning as his character from the original (though not a punk here), and he watches a scene on TV when he was dressed as a punk in *New Wave Hookers* Part 1. Ron Jeremy plays a magical fellow based on Jim Carrey's The Mask. He pops up in blackface and says, "Strrrroooookin'!!!" I declare the world to be officially over. (BC)

NEW YEAR'S EVIL

Dir. Emmett Alston / 1980

A trashy new wave pop DJ named Blaze is targeted
by a psychopath on New Year's Eve.

**DON'T DARE MAKE
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS...
UNLESS YOU PLAN TO LIVE!**

Blaze and her company have organized a major network music showcase for the New Year, to be televised from coast-to-coast. The neon-clad audience is excited, the cameras are rolling and a maniac has just telephoned to warn the popular radio personality that she and several other hapless women will be losing their lives by the time the clock strikes midnight. But the show must go on, and Blaze watches the minutes tick by as the string of deaths move ever closer. Who is the killer? Could it be an obsessive fan? Is it Blaze's unbalanced teenage son, who enjoys wearing pantyhose over his face? Does it matter? No, mainly because his ultimate victim is patently unlikeable, and the film's other distractions are much more interesting than the watered-down murder mystery at its core. Sure, the deaths are rewardingly gory, but the main attraction here is the central concert, which has attracted all varieties of madcap rejects despite the fact that it seems to have been booked in a Holiday Inn banquet hall. Though the bulk of the revelers are standard new wave warriors, one standout attendee is a fat middle-aged man with his arms encased in bubble wrap sheaths. The audience pogos and gyrates to music from fakey-but-actual acts Shadow and Made In Japan, both of which have the spiky hair and rags of the punk look nailed, but mysteriously churn out yawn-inducing bar rock or, worse yet, Caucasian blues. Still, the kids are alive with pleasure and unaware of the threat that looms over the celebration.

New Year's Evil doesn't carry the same street cred of other holiday-themed slasher favorites, but deserves some attention for its oblique atmosphere and casting choices, including the "hip music personality" lead being played by 37-year-old Roz Kelly. Director Alston never achieved prominence, but would go on to make 1988's *Demonwarp*, an incredible, grossly ignored direct-to-video cheapie featuring sasquatches, aliens, zombies and the great George Kennedy. If that doesn't sound like a goddamn masterpiece to you, then what are you living for? (ZC)

NEW YORK STORIES

Dirs. Martin Scorsese, Woody Allen
& Francis Ford Coppola / 1989

A trio of short pieces from the grand old wizards of American film.

Scorsese incorporates punks into his work for the third time, here as background fluff for a performance art piece by Gregory Stark (Steve Buscemi). Disgusted, emotionally-imploding painter Lionel Dobie (Nick Nolte) watches from the wings, swallowed among black turtlenecks and expensive haircuts. When the crowd breaks, a mohawked culture shocker is visible sipping wine with the Brooklyn elite. Looks like somebody needs to go back to Punk School.

Woody Allen submits a hilarious tale of omnipotent Jewish motherhood, while Coppola paves the way for daughter Sofia's artistic failures by letting the then-17-year-old co-author his segment. (ZC)

NICE DREAMS

Dir. Tommy Chong / 1981

Cheech and Chong smoke shoddily-rolled cigarettes that make them act sleepy and friendly.

The red-eyed comic duo commandeers an ice cream truck that they use to peddle non-frozen wares, if you catch my drift. Special police group Narcothon is hot on their trail led by Sgt. Stedanko (Stacy Keach!), a closet doper with "FUCK IRAN!" scrawled on his office chalkboard. The governmental scrutiny is stepped up when the genetically-engineered weed begins transforming tokers into lizardmen.

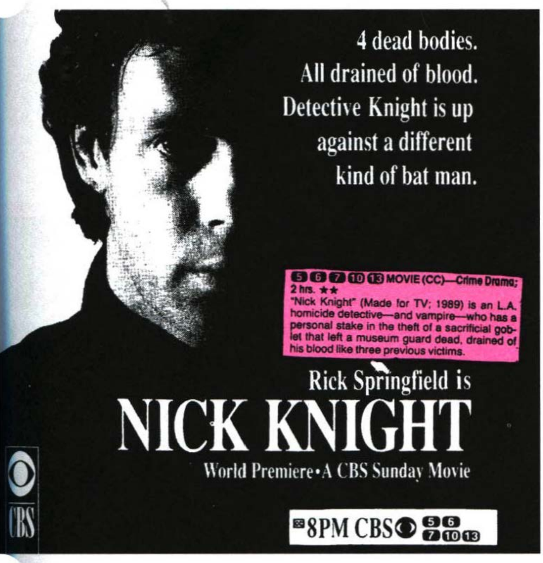
Meanwhile, our heroes stop off for a meal at real-life revered punk venue/eatery The Hong Kong Café, where new wave waiters in traditional restaurant formalwear toss noodle bowls on the table. A narcoticized schizoid couple stumbles in, the male half (Paul Reubens!) mumbling something about a hamburger train. He disappears under the table, snorts a pound of cocaine and accurately declares, "Bruce Springsteen is fucking up the future of rock and roll." Timothy Leary, Linnea Quigley, Cheryl Rainbeaux Smith and verbal sound effects master Michael Winslow also appear. (*ZC*)

NICK KNIGHT

Dir. Farhad Mann / 1989

A vampire cop fights crime on the night shift.

FM radio superstar Rick Springfield is a tenderhearted undead policeman hot on the trail of another bloodsucker, this one with a sweet tooth for innocent hobos. His investigation leads him to a great archaeological mystery involving human sacrifice in prehistoric blood rites. The "Jessie's Girl" songwriter really does play his part adequately, especially when levitating 20 feet in the air after taking an extended blast from an Uzi. The identity of the vagrant-eater is eventually revealed, not long after he follows a couple punk youths through the alleys of Hollywood. This was the TV movie pilot for what would become the unexpectedly long-running *Forever Knight* series. (*ZC*)



4 dead bodies.
All drained of blood.
Detective Knight is up
against a different
kind of bat man.

5 6 7 10 13 MOVIE (CC)—Crime Drama; 2 hrs. ★★
"Nick Knight" (Made for TV; 1989) is an L.A. homicide detective—and vampire—who has a personal stake in the theft of a sacrificial goblet that left a museum guard dead, drained of his blood like three previous victims.

Rick Springfield is
NICK KNIGHT
World Premiere • A CBS Sunday Movie
8PM CBS 5 6 7 10 13

NIGHT ANGEL

Dir. Dominique Othenin-Girard / 1990

A supernatural sex-beast wrecks the party.

A blood-crazed female demonoid slashes the wife, son and throat of a prominent fashion magazine publisher. Later, she happens to stop in at the same nightclub where the magazine's staff has gathered for his memorial. One arrogant writer (named Rod, naturally) brags about how he'll be meeting his hot date at the bar, but the woman is soon revealed to be new wave! Bleccccch, I guess. One amused onlooker says, "Well, maybe she's good in bed." Another replies, "No one's *that* good." As her shamed suitor approaches her, she's intercepted by a studs-n-leather, green-fringed punk scuzzbone. Rod dismisses this lowlife but later ditches his own date to be fatally seduced by the she-creature.

The succubus moves on to bewitch and bed down with everyone in her path, including Oscar-nominee Karen Black. She later stages an otherworldly orgy of mutant nightmarishness that features eyeball-popping, nose-eating, bondage dads, an obese woman with anguished human faces growing out of her breasts and even a couple of marginally new wave vampires! This level of hysteria is consistent throughout the film, a glorious barrage of chest-ripping latex monstrosities, welfare occultism and penis-shriveling sexual delights. (*ZC*)

A NIGHT AT THE ROXBURY

Dir. John Fortenberry / 1998

A bit that was tiresome in three-minute sketches gets a full 82 minutes.

There've been a lot of movie adaptations of sketches from *Saturday Night Live*, with mixed results; for every *Wayne's World* there are three *It's Pats*. This movie definitely falls in the latter category, not surprising as it was based on a recurring skit that featured two guys in a dance club nodding along to Haddaway's "What Is Love," stopping only to force a ping-pong hump sandwich upon any female who entered their immediate vicinity.

The feature film was intended to develop the characters beyond one-note, monosyllabic Guidos, and provide the back-story that no one was clamoring for. Ergo, we learn that they are brothers—Steve (Will Ferrell) and Doug Butabi (Chris Kattan)—who dream of getting into super exclusive club The Roxbury. Unfortunately, they're much too obnoxious and unstylish to get in the door. Though they continue to frequent lesser clubs, they never lose hope that they'll join the elite.

One of the only establishments where the Butabi Brothers are welcome is The Mudd Club (no relation to the NYC landmark), a dive bar populated by punks, bikers and scuzzoids. Welcome, however, does not mean well received, as their Eurotrash wardrobe is grossly out-of-place and the women are even tougher to impress. Additionally, it's nearly impossible to execute their trademark head bob to grindcore riffs and blast beats.

With barely enough plot for a 10-minute film, *A Night at the Roxbury* creaks along to its absurd happy ending for almost an hour and a half. Really, the only good part of the whole movie is a cameo by Richard Grieco. This is only for people who enjoy embarrassing '90s techno, clumsy sexual harassment and not laughing at jokes. (*LAF*)

NIGHT CHILDREN

Dir. Norbert Meisel / 1989

A cop and a parole officer employ differing strategies in their attempts at getting at-risk youth off the mean streets.

David Carradine is Max, an LA policeman who spends his days forcing his way into people's homes and then being assaulted by them. He seems like a tough cop, but you know he's really an all-right guy because he buys his partner hamburgers. A group of punks swears revenge against him after he pursues them in a rooftop chase that ends with one plummeting to her death. The gang is clearly vicious; everywhere they go they're intentionally bumping into strangers, scowling or growling at anyone who looks at them or pushing each other around in shopping carts. They all have tough names like Spike, Blade and Rawbone and are introduced while grabbing an old lady's purse and tossing it in the street. But the movie's cartoonish presentation of these wannabe societal menaces is undercut by more darkly realistic scenes showing the possessive, abusive relationship Blade has with his girlfriend Jenny, who he's constantly shooting full of heroin to keep docile and obliging. Nancy Kwan (director Meisel's wife) plays Deborah, a parole officer desperate to get Jenny away from the gang and into a safe environment. Her belief in the possibility of reform stands in stark contrast to Max's nihilistic attitude and "throw away the key" mentality. The two of them are engaged in an office romance, but their disagreements about how to handle the gang strains their relationship. This all leads to innocent victims being murdered by the police, Max surviving a gunshot wound to the head and a saccharine happy ending implying that at least one of the gang members is able to turn their life around.

The movie is overly serious but fails to make any relevant points. It tries too hard to address real sociological problems like drug abuse and teen homelessness while at the same time skirting over issues of police brutality so that Carradine's cop can remain the film's hero. The male gang members are all painted as abusive psychos and the female gang members are all helpless victims. It also was made just a bit too late to capture the sleazy heyday of Hollywood Blvd., relying heavily on set-dressed versions of punk squats to evoke the appropriate atmosphere. By far the most exciting location they capture is an old-school arcade where the gang likes to hang out, get drunk, make out and play Bally Kick-Off pinball. (*TS*)

NIGHT OF THE COMET

Dir. Thom Eberhardt / 1984

A small group of teens survive a meteoric holocaust only to find that they are not alone.

Super fun '80s flick with equal laughs and scares. A girl doesn't realize that the world has ended and is clueless to all the debris around her house. Once she catches on, she hides out with her sister in an old radio station. Meanwhile, after running from an undead child and coming to terms with the fact that his family is dead, young Hector drives through the streets of LA dressed as Santa Claus. He meets up with the girls and doesn't have sex with them, so they naturally figure he must either be gay or a true gentleman.

Quasi-zombie punks attack them in an abandoned store. One (played by Chris Pedersen of Penelope Spheeris' *Suburbia*) has a shaved head and wears an earring. Another wears three pairs of new wave shades over regular sunglasses. Early in the film, a movie theater concessionaire spots a leather jacket-clad customer and complains that he doesn't like their type attending the theater. He's afraid they'll cut up the seats.

There's a top-notch dream sequence with zombie cops, but even more amazing is the part where a doctor (the always amazing Geoffrey Lewis) expresses his love for children before draining the blood from their bodies. Mary Woronov stands witness. When one of the kids asks the nurse what the doctor is doing, the nurse replies, "You'll just giggle and then you'll feel a little sleepy. And when you wake up, do you know where you'll be? With Santa Claus at the North Pole." Another nurse adds, "In fact, you'll live with Santa Claus for the rest of your life." An early title for this film was *Teenage Mutant Horror Comet Zombies*. (*BC*)

NIGHT OF THE DEMONS

Dir. Kevin Tenney / 1988

Reveling students are murdered by an evil house.

Half-metal/half-punk/all-slob party goon Stooge opens the film by mooning an elderly man. The 30-year-old teen has a geometric rainbow hairdo, anarchy symbol shirt and his Halloween costume consists of a rubber pig nose. He meets up with the ultra-wholesome Judy and Jay at a party hosted by school creep Angela at the abandoned Hull House (a nod to the real-life Jane Addams residence), site of a gruesome multiple homicide decades earlier. Giggling fun-girl Suzanne (Linnea Quigley) blares punk music from a boombox spangled with Fear and TSOL stickers. The youths hold a "mirror séance" which calls forth a demon head and ushers in the standard assault of furious spirits. Stooge is unmoved by these developments:

"Eat a bowl of fuck...I am here to PARTYYYYYY!!!" The restless supernatural beasts possess and destroy, laying waste to the kids one by one as a demonized Angela gyrates to the song "Stigmata Martyr" by Bauhaus.

Yeah, sure, the film is formulaic, but still a legendary standout of its era, if only for Quigley's inexplicable lipstick-in-the-boob segment. She would later marry the effects artist responsible for that slice of Hollywood magic. And divorce him. (*ZC*)

NIGHT OF THE DRIBBLER

Dir. Jack Bravman / 1990

A psycho is killing the high school basketball team.

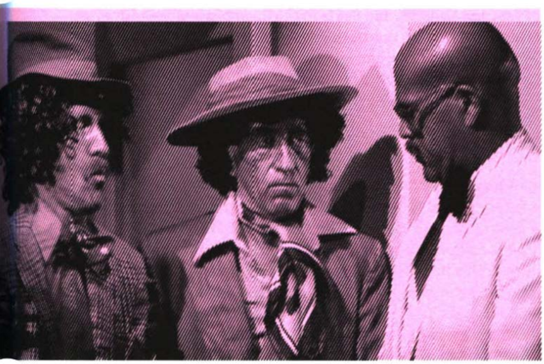
Sometimes a comedy can be so forced and unfunny that it actually becomes better than the filmmakers could have possibly intended. Such is the case with *Night of the Dribbler*, an obscure Canadian slasher spoof from the guys who brought you *Zombie Nightmare*. Basically a showcase for third-rate stand up comedian/impressionist/game show regular Fred Travalena (who plays three different characters...in your face, Peter Sellers!), this film follows a stalker in a big, smiley-faced basketball mask who's maiming and murdering school sports heroes The Watergate Plumbers. The jokes are stale and relentless, the high school "kids" are all in their thirties, most of the cast barely remember their lines, and a song that rips off Yello's obnoxious hit "Oh Yeah" plays repeatedly on the soundtrack.

I'll admit that I laughed a lot while watching *Dribbler*, but mostly because of how goddamn awkward the movie is. Still, there are a few genuinely successful moments. My favorite is an awful, dialogue-heavy scene where the whiny water boy expresses his desire to play on the team. His dramatic delivery is pathetic and the film's musical score gets gradually louder until its volume completely overtakes the actors' voices. At first I thought was the result of inept sound mixing, but then the camera pans over and just off-screen is a kid with blue hair cranking a hard rock instrumental on his boombox. This blue-haired punk is only onscreen for about 15 seconds, and I think the actor plays another character in the film as well. Maybe that got him *two* $5.00 paychecks for appearing in this forgotten horror parody. (*SH*)

NIGHT PATROL

Dir. Jackie Kong / 1984

A ceaseless rain of comic moments centered
in a zany police precinct.



Before the opening credits have finished, the viewer has already endured g-string bikinis, wacky homosexuals and two separate varieties of animal shit. Murray Langston (aka bag-sporting humor legend The Unknown Comic) is our central goofbone cop and provided many of the script's gags, including men battling with their wangs and a couple sperm bank zingers. A silver-maned punk prostitute makes her rounds alongside a pregnant hooker advertising "Two for one." Later, a mohawked diner busboy smokes a Fat One. Smothers Brothers alumnus Pat Paulsen and terror/action icon Linda Blair show up as fellow officers, and their short-fused captain is played by groundbreaking dwarf actor Billy Barty, who stormed out of the film's premiere in a rage after hearing the pronounced fart sounds director Kong had added behind every one of his scenes. Other cameos include The Diceman, *The Gong Show*'s Jaye P. Morgan, and *The Karate Kid's* Pat Morita credited as "Rape Victim." From blackface to vaudeville misogyny, *Night Patrol* establishes Langston as a comedic genius...but only when he has a bag on his head. (*ZC*)

NIGHT SHAPES

Dir. Andreas Dresen / 1999

People are shitty everywhere, even when the Pope
is coming to town.

This is a German story of one night in the lives of several people just trying to get by, have a good time and conquer their various struggles before the Pope arrives in Berlin the next morning. In short, it's five stories that mingle together and wind to one basic end. We begin with the homeless couple who've lucked upon some money and want nothing more than to spend one night in a hotel in a bed with a shower. Then there's the country bumpkin who's in town to find someone who can help him experience the love he's only read about in magazines; finding that "love" with a barely legal junkie who may or may not be a prostitute. The common thread is a group of street punks who steal something from one character (the bumpkin's wallet) and help the other (trying to get the homeless woman out of the road). Mohawked, pierced and dreadlocked, none of them look to be over 19 years old and they roam the street like a pack of dogs. They float into one segment and out of another, creating a transitional storyline of angry youth as they steal the limo driver's Cadillac. They drunkenly drive around before dousing the limo with gasoline and watching it burn on the beach.

Each of the stories in this black comedy has a not-so-happy ending. It's extremely entertaining, but very uncomfortable in some spots. But then, shitty things happen and shitty people are everywhere. (*JH*)

THE NIGHT STALKER

Dir. Max Kleven / 1987

A burnt-out cop is saddled with bringing down
an unstoppable madman.

Before you press play, prepare yourself for viewing the chinniest movie ever made. The rectangular skull of Charles Napier is the only possible Hollywood competition for the impossibly masculine profile of Robert "*Maniac Cop*" Z'Dar, and *The Night Stalker* is ground zero for this earth-shattering Battle of the Jawbones. We're talking more Chins than Chinatown. Here, Z'Dar is Sommers, a hulking psychopath who gets his kicks snuffing out prostitutes. His skin is supernaturally impervious to bullets, which makes things hard for investigating officer/raging alcoholic J.J. Striker (Napier), whose first scene consists of him hacking up phlegm while rolling around his apartment in cotton briefs. He freshens up for work, feeds some vodka to his hamster and heads out to the neighborhood burger stand. As he chokes down a doughnut, three street puds approach the counter. Their leader, an obese trasher with leather straps and a curly red mohawk, asks the greaseball proprietor if he serves all-natural food and demands that they all be fed for free. He then steps over and forcibly guzzles the contents of Striker's flask. The inevitable brawl breaks out and everyone is violently humiliated, especially the fat punk who has a glass jar shattered against his skull, is kicked in the nuts, gets his face flattened against the burger grill and—for dessert—has a jar full of pickles dumped on his melon.

By this point, both Striker and the viewer have forgotten about the indestructible maniac, but soon his killing streak intensifies and Striker joins the bulk of LA's police force in scouring for clues. One self-assured pimp offers little help as he mysteriously proclaims, "I'm like the shadows. I'm everyfuckingwhere..." This tireless search eventually leads to the inevitable face-off (no chin pun intended), and there are more equally powerful moments along the way, including a fantastic montage of the mighty Z'Dar murdering cows and amputee hobos with his bare hands. There's also a stunning slow-motion liquor store robbery/shootout and top grade performances from Napier and his precinct pals, a few of whom catch a fellow squad member receiving a blowjob from a transvestite hooker. This level of respectability is maintained throughout the entire feature.

The film was advertised as being based on the Richard "Night Stalker" Ramirez killings that rocked greater Los Angeles in the mid-'80s. Except for the facts, names, physical appearances and ethnicities of all involved, nothing has been changed. (*ZC*)

NIGHT TRAIN TO VENICE

Dir. Carlo U. Quinterio / 1993

Semi-surreal antics on a skinhead-infested railway.

A group of passengers en route to Carnival includes onscreen degenerate Malcolm McDowell and off-screen degenerate Hugh Grant. The latter plays Martin, a writer who has angered Europe's neo-Nazi youth with a published exposé on their lifestyle. Five sewer-caliber punk skins board the train to hunt him, but instead spend most of their time murdering chubby porters, eating sloppily and putting bras on over their T-shirts. While chasing down Martin, one exclaims, "I'm gonna fuck his ass, I tell ya!" A climactic moment features an enormous white supremacy rally, where anglo-nationalists of various sects and hair lengths scream "Sieg heil!" beneath swastika banners while menacing a naked man on a leash. McDowell's character is the omnipotent Satan figure who makes the skinheads explode after he may or may not have turned them into Dobermans. This plot point is indicative of the reeking art-nausea that makes watching this film feel as awkwardly depressing as walking in on your parents having sex...and then watching for 90 minutes. (*ZC*)

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3: DREAM WARRIORS

Dir. Chuck Russell / 1987

Freddy Krueger keeps the world safe from teenagers.

The world's most beloved child-murderer is back with another batch of sleepless victims. For this round, his targets are residents at the local mental institution, including Kristen (Patricia Arquette), Phillip (*Class of 1999's* Bradley Gregg) and Laurence Fishburne as a hospital orderly. Returning is first film rival Nancy (Heather Langenkamp) and her alcoholic cop dad (John Saxon), who give their all to destroy the supernatural psychopath for good. Not to ruin the ending, but they don't succeed.

The series really found its footing in this third installment, expanding the methods of Freddy's kills and upping the ante for creative set pieces. In one scene, former junkie Taryn (Jennifer Rubin) confronts Freddy in a dreamworld skid row alley. Her hair is sculpted into a skyscraping mohawk and her studded leather clothes exhibit a theatrical dedication to street-level battlegear. She musters as much faux-punk adrenaline as possible for her knife battle with the undead manster, but is defeated when he transforms his patented blades into hypodermic needles filled with sweet intravenous nectar. Then, as if things weren't already bad enough, her forearm injection scars sprout tiny mouths and begin smacking their lips like a baby staring at a pile of nipples. (*ZC*)

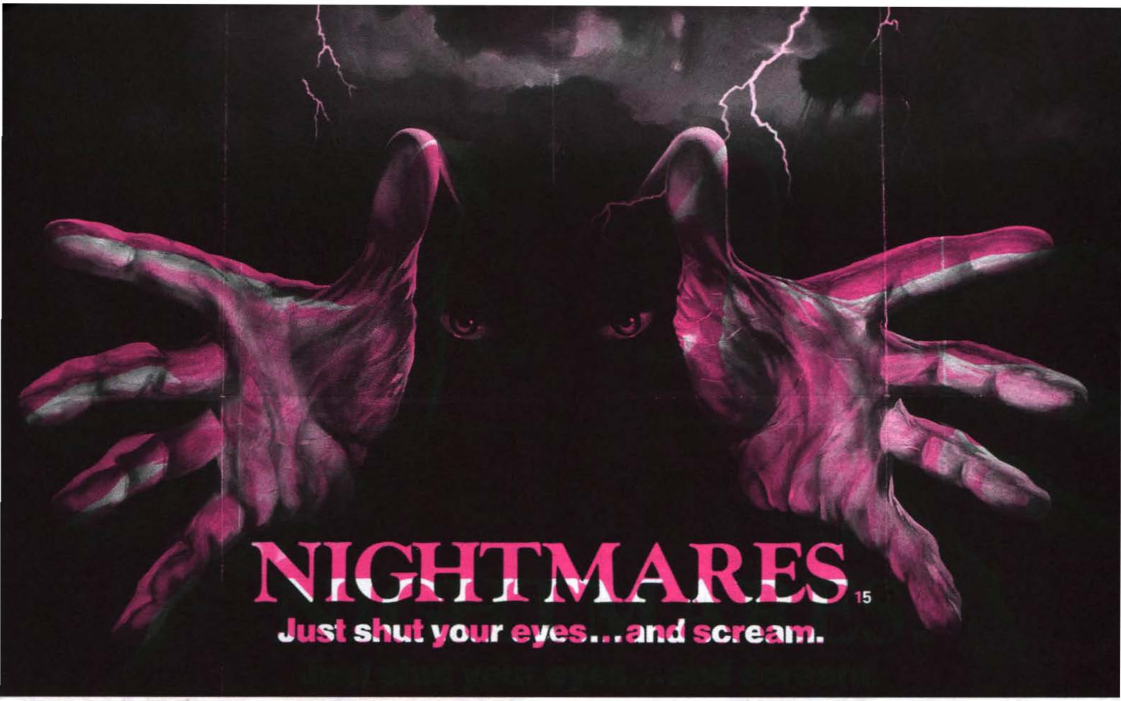
NIGHTMARES

Dir. Joseph Sargent / 1983

Tales of unspeakable terror...as long as you're afraid
of cars, mice and video games.

The four stories in this quietly unhinged horror anthology were originally shot as individual episodes for eerie TV series *Darkroom*, but were each deemed too intense and/or ridiculous for broadcast. Fortunately, they were later souped up with new, more offensive footage and released to capitalize on the success of *Creepshow*. If you're looking for a movie with giant super-powered rats, lunatic gas station slashers, and Satan in the form of a 4-wheel-drive monster truck bursting out of the desert and attacking a fallen priest, *Nightmares* should be among your top 10 choices. Did I mention the punk rock arcade addict going one-on-one with digital demonoid The Bishop of Battle? Ai yi yi...

Emilio Estevez is J.J., a casually punk teen who strolls through LA with Fear's "I Don't Care about You" blasting on his Walkman. His destination is the local arcade, where he hustles some hard-gaming cholos on a shill bet and has to run for his life. Escaping back to the Valley, he spends his winnings on a few hours at his machine of choice: The Bishop of Battle. The arcade closes and J.J. heads home, where his parents hassle him about his gaming obsession's impact on his grades. He explodes into an incredibly convincing argument with his dad, screaming, "Go to hell!" and slamming his bedroom door in a perfect teenage tantrum. As his mother wrings her hands over his rebellious behavior, J.J. straps on the Walkman, presses play on his Black Flag tape and sneaks out


NIGHTMARES
15
Just shut your eyes...and scream.

the window. At the arcade, he feeds quarters into the slot until he reaches the game's unseen final level. Suddenly, the console goes wild, the game implodes and pixelated alien ships attack from all sides. J.J. is forced to use his hand-eye coordination to thwart an alien invasion, and faces the actual Bishop of Battle by night's end. Estevez would again appear as a Fear-listenin', parent-hatin' LA punk in *Repo Man* just one year later. Also, keep a peeled eye for a dramatic performance by Fear frontman Lee Ving (credited as "Lee James Jude") in the segment *Terror in Topanga*. (*ZC*)

NINA HAGEN = PUNK + GLORY

Dir. Peter Sempel / 1999

A chaotic study of rock's most unique female icon.

Various phases in the unearthly vocalist's personal and musical life are layered non-chronologically in several languages. Whether she's mugging in leather for a photo shoot or reading a fairytale to her child, Hagen possesses an intimidating cartoonish intensity, always on the verge of laughter, tears or bursting into a multi-octave acapella number. Collaborators and friends give their take on the wildwoman; Motörhead's Lemmy calls her "neurotic and excellent," she samples snack foods with actor Udo Kier and highly regarded art types Bill Rice, Blixa Bargeld and Jonas Mekas throw in their two cents. She even slaps tongues with garish funkmaster George Clinton!

Hagen is often wrongly categorized as a new wave musician. Though the herky-jerky, faux bionic aggression of that genre sometimes bubbles up on her albums, her style is entirely unique. This jumbled exploration serves as tremendous evidence, displaying assaults on classical opera as well as performances of her more traditionally vicious tracks. Director Sempel had featured her in a couple small portions of his film *Dandy* (1988), but even in a feature-length format, the viewer is left mystified and—to Sempel's credit—even more curious than before the movie started. (*ZC*)

NO PICNIC

Dir. Philip Hartman / 1987

New York living at its most soul-crushing.

Middle-aged vending machine attendant Mac (David Brisbin) hopelessly treads Manhattan's deadest blocks, openly disappointed with everything he lays eyes on. The city has fallen apart under the heavy weight of crying babies, babbling lunatics and fresher embodiments of urban failure, i.e. a passing denim-clad hardcore punk. Everyone around Mac shares his misery, from his favorite bartender (Luis Guzman) to his short-tempered downstairs neighbor (Richard Hell in a quick but comical cameo). Mac spends seemingly endless hours taking his disapproval to all corners of the borough—wandering from parks to alleys—at one point even ending up at a concert by modestly iconic hick-rock combo The Raunch Hands. He eventually becomes infatuated with a prostitute who was impregnated by her now-dead pimp (Steve Buscemi), a development that does nothing to improve Mac's life. In a fit of drunken self-loathing, he quits his job and celebrates in a fit of wild dancing with a bar-crawling new wave couple.

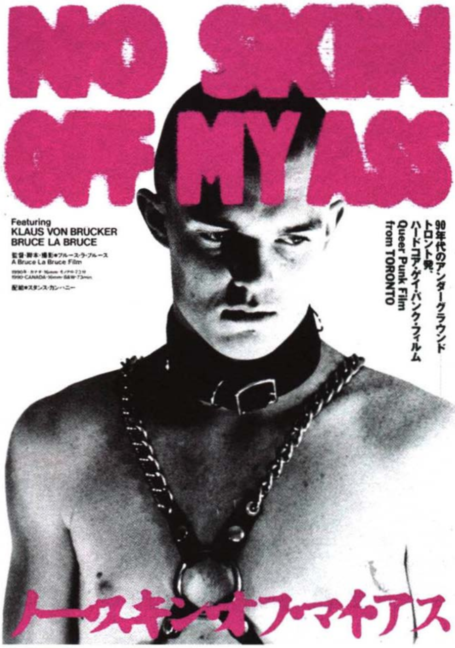
No Picnic is an earnest, well-shot addendum to the late '70s–mid '80s NYC independent film movement. The cityscape formerly detailed by directors like Jim Jarmusch and Amos Poe has been coated with an impenetrable layer of bitterness, its hopeful young amateur artists having grown into professional alcoholic unknowns. Mac's dime-store noir narration drones over the relentless depression, matching the deliberately gritty, high contrast black-and-white photography. (*ZC*)

NO SKIN OFF MY ASS

Dir. Bruce LaBruce / 1990

A lonesome, sensitive man falls for a rugged street kid.

LaBruce's breakthrough film kicks off with footage of a restless, shorn youth pacing the city streets in a Discharge logo jacket. The accompanying vocal lounge score repeats, "Skinheads just turn me on." On cue with the lyrics, a hairdresser (LaBruce himself) approaches the skinhead and invites him back to his apartment for a warm bath. Shots of various oi maniacs are inserted as LaBruce perches demurely on the toilet lid, talking softly as the boy soaps himself up. Their differences can't be ignored; the skinhead yanks a Carpenters cassette from his host's stereo, drops in his own Operation Ivy tape and begins skanking circles around the living room. He eventually returns to the care of his sister, an amateur filmmaker who makes him strip down to be belittled by her friends. The hairdresser indulges in leather-bound, bootlicking domination dreams and—when the skinhead enters his life again—nipple piercings and erotic head shavings that lead to the inevitable. There's some minimal conflict as the skinhead struggles with his personal desires vs. his chosen, typically homophobic subculture, but he ultimately gives in to his true nature.


NO SKIN OFF MY ASS
Featuring
KLAUS VON BRÜCKER
BRUCE LA BRUCE
監督・脚本・撮影●ブルース・ラ・ブルース
A Bruce La Bruce Film
1990・CANADA・16mm・B&W・73min.
配給●スタンス・カンパニー
90年代のアンダーグラウンド
トロント発、
ハードコア・ゲイ・パンク・フィルム
Queer Punk Film
from TORONTO
ノー・スキン・オフ・マイ・アス

The film is a loose remake of Robert Altman's *A Cold Day in the Park*, with segments of that film cut in and LaBruce in the lonely, desperate role originally played by Sandy Dennis. The skinhead and his playfully abusive, artistically-repressed sister are played by actual siblings Klaus & Jena von Brucker, which makes his multiple nude scenes in her presence even more jarring. (*ZC*)

BRUCE LaBRUCE

Director/Star – *NO SKIN OFF MY ASS; SUPER 8½*

DAM: How did *No Skin Off My Ass* first come up?

BLB: I had already made a half-dozen short experimental films and had been showing them around Toronto at punk clubs and alternative art spaces. When I met my producer, Jürgen Brüning, who was visiting from Berlin, I pitched to him the idea of a feature length Super 8 film that would be a remake of Robert Altman's *That Cold Day in the Park* starring Sandy Dennis, one of my favorite films. I just transposed the narrative of a vagrant/hustler being picked up in the park by an old maid to a skinhead being picked up in the park by a gay hairdresser.

How much of your character was based on you, and in what way?

I played the gay hairdresser in *NSOMA*, and my boyfriend at the time, Klaus Von Brucker, played the skinhead. I wasn't a hairdresser, but I was gay. He wasn't a skinhead, but I made him shave his head and pretend he was one. For the character I just made him a little bit more effeminate than I am in real life, and my boyfriend acted more butch. We just exaggerated a little. But the sex scenes between us are pretty much real.

How was the film distributed/screened, and was there any strong audience or critical reaction to the graphic content?

The thing is that I never really expected that the film would be screened outside of punk clubs or alternative art spaces. I even showed it on Super 8 a few times before it was blown up to 16mm. My producer was already connected somewhat in the film world, so he put it on the festival circuit, mostly gay but some international festivals as well, and suddenly it was playing all over the world. This wreaked havoc with my relationships with my boyfriend and the other friends who helped with the movie, because we were all doing the same type of thing and suddenly I was getting all the attention. Also my boyfriend felt ambivalent about our sex lives being exhibited all over the globe, and so did I actually. When it came out, in 1991 or so, it was still quite unusual for films playing on the festival circuit to be sexually explicit and there's also the nipple piercing and whatnot, so it did create a bit of a fuss. Also, I learned that when you capture yourself having sex on celluloid, people start to treat you a bit strangely. Some people thought I was a porn star, and some people just thought I was either deranged or morally degenerate. Of course others loved it.

Was *Slam!* a punk film, and was it actually destroyed by the government?

Oh, we routinely had tapes of our films destroyed at the border. It happened more than once. Also our fanzines and mail would sometimes just disappear with no explanation, or sometimes they would send a notice saying that our films and fanzines were seditious or violated various prohibited sexual acts such as anal penetration and bondage and nudity with violence and even bestiality—a pug innocently licks Dave Diktor's dick in our short film *Home Movies*. Things were a lot more conservative then, especially in Canada. *Slam!* was composed of footage I shot in a mosh pit of Scream, MDC and Mr. T Experience, intercut with found gay porno set to a Carpenters soundtrack. Later, when I was having *No Skin Off My Ass* blown up in a lab to 16mm, the lab owner called the cops and they tried to get me to destroy the negative, but I managed to sneak away with it.

Have you consistently caught a lot of heat for your skinhead interests?

Oh, sure. I mean I'm certainly not an apologist for neo-Nazi skinheads. But I'm open about the fact that they kind of turn me on sexually. I had a boyfriend in the '80s who was sort of a punk hustler. We broke up and a year later I ran into him and he had transmogrified into a neo-Nazi skinhead. There were quite of few of them in Toronto at that time, before the punks and the cops basically ran them out of town. So I thought I could reform him and I let him stay with me for a month and we had sex again, but then I would try to humiliate him for being an idiot neo-Nazi and he ended up beating the shit out of me right in front of my house. So that was it, I kicked him out and never saw him again. But it still kind of turned me on. What can I say, I'm a pervert.

So when I made my full-fledged neo-Nazi porn movie, *Skin Flick*, which is very ambivalent about the subject, there were accusations of racism. There were protestors outside the ICA in London when it screened there, and the B'Nai Brith society complained when Pleasuredome screened it in Toronto and the police came to see if they would press charges. But they didn't.

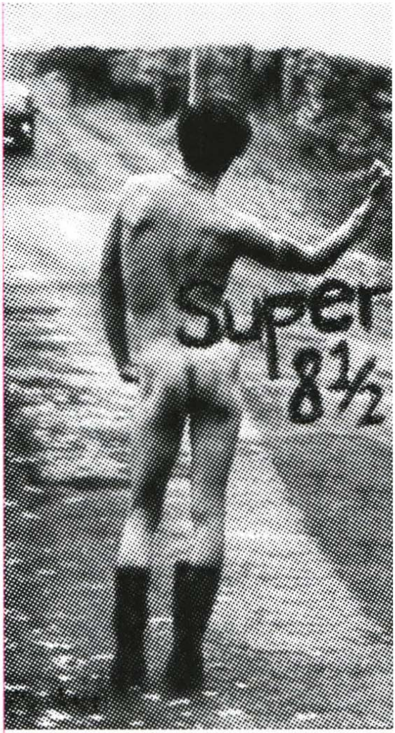
Of course now that I'm married to a black man, people hesitate to call me racist.

***Super 8 1/2* was a very different movie from *No Skin*, both more comedic and more tragic. Where did this story come from?**

Super 8 1/2 was my 16mm follow up to *No Skin Off My Ass*. It is a loose remake of Frank Perry's *Play it As It Lays*, a Tuesday Weld film, another fave of mine. It was meant to be loosely autobiographical, a fictionalized account of my experience of suddenly being known as a pornographer and having all my old friends hate me. I was really going through a lot of emotional duress during that time, so it was a real labor of hate.

You are credited as writer, director, producer, lead AND butt double on the film. Is it fair to say that this is your most personal project?

Yes, well, I pushed the sexual envelope even further with *Super 8 1/2*, mostly because so many people were judgmental and scandalized by *No Skin Off My Ass*. So I graduated to full-screen close-up blowjobs and getting fucked in the ass. I also had a gun shoved up my butt. My actor wouldn't do it, so I had to be his butt double. But I did have a rule at that time that I would never ask anybody to do anything on film that I wouldn't do myself.



Did you run into any complications while shooting, including—but not limited to—the roadside sex scene?

I couldn't even begin to enumerate the number of complications. My first camera guy had a nervous breakdown and thought I was working for the Chinese mafia. I was breaking up with my boyfriend during filming, so I was an emotional wreck. Everyone was working for free so some days no one would show up. I contracted Hepatitis A and had to do an outdoor sex scene in winter. I had to use outdated stock, some of which turned out to be unusable. The guy that did the negative cutting turned out to not know what he was doing so the negative started falling apart when they were trying to make a print in the lab. A few other guys in the lab thought I was a pornographer and they didn't want to make prints.

NO SURRENDER

Dir. Peter Smith / 1985

An outgoing nightclub manager ruins a New Year's Eve party by double-booking two hostile senior citizen social groups and lining up an evening of subpar entertainment.

A run-down Liverpool bar called The Charleston Club is the setting for this dark British comedy. It's the first day on the job for new manager Mike (Michael Angelis) and he discovers that his predecessor has sabotaged the evening's activities. Two conflicting senior social groups are booked—one Catholic and the other Protestant—and some truly awful performers are on the bill. One is a nervous magician played by Elvis Costello, and the evening's music is provided by a group that is likely intended to represent a punk rock band, though the filmmakers seem unclear on the concept. The singer has mime facepaint and actually does a little "trapped in a box" routine. The band is well-groomed in tidy plaid shirts while they play a sloppy amateur rock song called "You're Going to Die." The director was probably told that punk rock bands consisted of odd-looking, talentless fellows playing confrontational music. The majority of the jokes and situations were too Liverpool-specific for me to fully comprehend, and the plot's themes were forced and obvious. I surrender! (*SH*)

NOMADS

Dir. John McTiernan / 1986

Ancient evil vs. bearded Frenchman.

A hysterical injured man is dropped off at an LA hospital, where attending doctor (Lesley-Anne Down) is exposed to his mania and—after his sudden death—his memories. The fresh corpse is Parisian anthropologist Pommier (Pierce Brosnan), who'd been living in America for a short time before ending up on the slab. As shrouded, mentally-projected flashbacks unfold in the doctor's head, she learns that Pommier had inadvertently angered a restless tribe of immortal damned spirits called the Innuat. These supernatural legends are known to take human form to torture and eventually destroy anyone that uncovers their secrets. For some unexplained reason, they've arrived in California dressed as leather punk scumbags and kicked off their reign of darkness by spraypainting "SEX DEATH PIGS KILL" on Pommier's garage. He follows their custom van into the heart of Hollywood, where their punk façade includes a stop at legendary scene hangout Oki Dog, and then a remote alley where the Innuats dump a cadaver and dance the night away. Pommier photographs the entire scene, getting in close enough to make out their features (and revealing that the spirits are played by new wave legends Adam Ant, Josie Cotton and Mary Woronov). It's a strong section with a powerful cast, but the film meanders into nothingness, its next memorable moment being two seconds of Full Frontal Brosnan. (*ZC*)

EL NORTE

Dir. Gregory Nava / 1983

California proves to be a disappointing Promised Land for two Mayan Indians.

The misery of struggling immigrants rarely makes for a fun night at the movies, though I did enjoy the claustrophobic moment where the two main characters crawl through an old sewer pipe and get attacked by rats. Near the end of this film, the male protagonist sits by his apartment's outdoor pool to ponder his employment problems. A pack of jaded coolsters walk by. One of them, a man with bleached, styled hair in ripped jeans and eye makeup, complains to a girl with a skinny blue tie and long overcoat that "the drummer was terrible. The singer was terrible. The band was terrible. The soloists were terrible. The sound was terrible." They then sit and sulk at a picnic table. One of the few films in this book to be inducted into the National Film Registry, right alongside *Blade Runner*, *The Terminator* and probably *Booty Call*. (*BC*)

NORTH SHORE

Dir. William Phelps / 1987

The "surf king of Arizona" moves to Hawaii to make it as a big-league surfer

The best aspect of the majority of teen films produced in the '80s is the romp factor. A donkey consuming drugs, jocks putting their heads through drywall and copious amounts of naked breasts are all earmarks of a fine and fulfilling '80s romp. *North Shore* has the potential to fit the bill with a plot centered on an innocent surfer from Arizona who wants to tame the major waves of Hawaii.

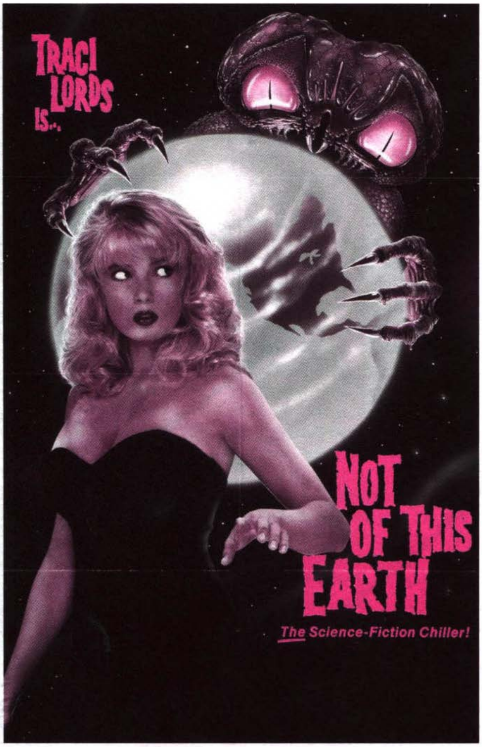
The boredom of middling beige filmmaking is apparent from the outset. What could have been loud and crass is instead adult contemporary easy listening. Naïve doof Rick (Matt Adler) runs into local toughs who scoff at his bungling inexperience, falls for an island beauty (Nia Peeples) and finds an old-school guru to show him the spiritual side of surfing. All the characters float about placidly in the stagnant pool of mediocre genre filmmaking. There is no spice involved, only one-track clichés. *North Shore* is ably made and wholly inoffensive, but that doesn't do much for the viewer. Relatively tasteful filmmaking makes for a real snore, though many members of the cast (including *Return of the Living Dead*'s John Philbin) handled their own surfing scenes.

Once again punks are the bright spot in a monochrome film. As the Arizona goober enters a raging Hawaiian Halloween party, he encounters some major Misfits-style goth punks, sneering and looking bored, as I imagine most punks would look while watching this movie. (*SC*)

NOT OF THIS EARTH

Dir. Jim Wynorski / 1988

Galactic ghouls devour the most scantily clad members of our species.


TRACI LORDS IS..
NOT OF THIS EARTH
The Science-Fiction Chiller!

Mr. Johnson (Arthur Roberts), a vampire from the planet Davana, is sent to Earth to replenish his planet's dwindling blood supply. He hires nurse Nadine Story (Traci Lords) to administer blood transfusions, but her boss' odd behavior begins to arouse her suspicions. She soon discovers the truth about Mr. Johnson, but will Nadine be able to resist the hypnotic power of the space vampire and escape certain doom?

Freshly post-porno Lords is both sexy and funny as Nadine in this remake of the 1957 Roger Corman sci-fi schlock film. Director Wynorski (*Chopping Mall; The Haunting of Morella*) doesn't deviate from the original much, besides substituting lovely ladies for bums as Mr. Johnson's victims. There's lots of cheapo special effects, a bit of gore, MIDI keyboard music, teased hair (not to mention silicone breasts), and the whole thing is pretty slight. *Last Year at Marienbad* this ain't, but what would you expect from Roger Corman, who released both versions? A notable punk moment: when a stripper shows up at Mr. Johnson's house, he beams her up to Davana via a porthole in his office and she comes back sporting new wave sunglasses and a thirst for human blood! She's later cornered in an alley by a gang of four (ha!) punks who threaten to rob and rape her, but she of course beats the shit out of them with the help of her new inhuman vampire powers. With likeable schlub Lenny Juliano as Johnson's chauffer Jeremy, who lobs plenty of double-entendres at the always-scantily-clad Traci, and a goofy cameo by Monique Gabrielle as a crazy lady at a bus stop. Ignore what happens in the opening credits, by the way, because none of it is in the film; they're scenes from other Corman titles including *Humanoids from the Deep, Galaxy of Terror* and *Battle Beyond the Stars*. (*KK*)

NUMBER ONE WITH A BULLET

Dir. Jack Smight / 1987

Two mismatched police partners shoot thugs and crack wise.

Robert Carradine and Billy Dee Williams stir up an absolute vacuum of entertainment, excreting an enormous combined load on the already tired black-n-white-buddy-cop formula established by *Lethal Weapon*. The actors display less chemistry than a kindergarten science fair while going undercover in drag, engaging in jet vs. helicopter battles and ruining each other's prospects at singles bars. At one point, their villainous heroin-pushing nemesis employs a spiky, maroon-haired scumbo to rifle through an abandoned apartment. Screen legend Peter Graves and character actor/fun factory Jon Gries can't even salvage this capsizing sewage barge. Also, Valerie Bertinelli looks like a Garbage Pail Kid. (*ZC*)

N.Y.H.C.

Dir. Frank Pavich / 1999

A "way-of-life" documentary on hardcore's most masculine coast, featuring interviews and performances from Madball, 25 Ta Life, No Redeeming Social Value and others.

Time hasn't worn away the chip on the shoulder of the New York hardcore scene. The bands, fans and labels are as furious as ever at everything from the death of independent business to that reliable ol' demon, Society. Roger Miret of Agnostic Front credits Tommy Rat as the founding father of NYHC. Rat himself traces the lineage of East Coast bands from Bad Brains to The Mad to The Misfits, all of them crucial components in what would develop into Eastern U.S. hardcore. Freddy from popular group Madball explains how he's been part of the scene since he was 7 years old. The band plays as members of the pit windmill-kick in succession. Cro-Mags singer John Joseph is one of several voices discussing the rough personal lives of many East Coast punks, and he and other members of the often disregarded Krishna-core scene are given plenty of screen time to share their place in the movement. (*ZC*)

ODD JOBS

Dir. Mark Story / 1986

Five motley jackasses struggle to start
their own business after college.

Max (Paul Reiser) is the well-meaning schlub chief of a handful of recently graduated pals with no direction. Eyebrowless albino neurotic Roy (Rick Overton) makes his final exit from the dorm by skiing down the stairs and out the second-story window. He bids farewell to a vegetating spike-haired dunderpunk and heads home to his military pop, who calls his son a wimp and then drives a tank to the grocery store. The Italian buddy (Paul Provenza) speaks jive, the sex maniac (*Joysticks*' Scott McGinnis) is nicknamed "The Woodman" and Max loses his girlfriend to wealthy megalomaniac Spud, played by Richard Dean "*MacGyver*" Anderson. The only character with any kind of dignity whatsoever is Max's closest companion Dwight (Robert Townsend), who simply has to suffer the uniquely '80s indignity of playing The Black Best Friend. Aimlessly searching for a vocation, Roy enters a hillbilly home to peddle a nuclear-powered vacuum cleaner and is kissed by a shirtless male redneck with a huge erection. The five losers convene at a neon nightclub where rooster-spiked punkoid maniacs in futuristic jumpsuits howl to piped-in smooth jazz. Also present at the dive: a gyrating longhair in a Nehru jacket; a robotic waver in geometric facepaint; and countless nigh-indescribable goofbones. Reiser later ends up hauling a big rig, partnered with a middle-aged greaser who dangles a Lucky Rabbit Penis from his rear-view mirror and has prosthetic boobs built into his driver's seat.

As you may have gathered, *Odd Jobs*—like its characters—rambles forward with little concern for where it ends up. Constant narration from all five leads makes the viewer want to pour hot wax in his ears. Every cheap tactic of '80s comedy is evenly represented: racist humor, gay humor, nudie humor, swearing-old-lady humor and even wacky sound effects...all topped off with Jake "Body By Jake" Steinfeld in drag. Wheeeee! I mean...Bleeeuugghhh! (*ZC*)

ODDBALLS

Dir. Miklos Lente / 1984

Three 12-year-old boys each pledge to lose their virginity
before summer camp ends.

A *Meatballs* rip-off that's a hundred times more fun than its source. Cartoon sound effects and old-fashioned camera tricks heighten the zany humor to make this literally a live-action *Cracked* magazine. The film starts with a bus running over Indiana Jones. In another nod to Spielberg, an alien attending the camp is caught trying to phone home. The alien-attending-camp premise was featured in *Meatballs 2*, which also came out in '84. Who stole from whom? This is a question historians will have to struggle with for years to come. Foster Brooks is in full form doing his drunken thing as camp director Uncle Hardy. He chases the kids with a machine gun and shoots a witch off a roof. When the campers first enter their cabin, they find a dead body and Dracula. One of the campers is a punk with light purple hair. He swears and pukes. When asked what he'd do if he met the girl of his dreams, he replies, "Spit on her." The punk goes to the men's room and changes the sign to say WOMEN. He opens the door to see that girls in bikinis have magically appeared. Cleavage busts out all over the place, making this not quite a movie for kids. The scene with the gay S&M aerobics instructor overdosing in front of the children also hinders this from achieving family-film status. This is probably the only comedy to feature a fat child wearing a fake mustache to sneak into a bar, only to step up to the counter and order pork and beans. (*BC*)

ONCE BITTEN

Dir. Howard Storm / 1985

Horny teens (including Jim Carrey) run afoul of an
equally horny vampire who needs virgin blood
to maintain her youthful appearance.

It's movies like this that are responsible for all those lost souls that move to LA to "make it." Y'know, the waiter/actor/singer-songwriter types who are taken as marks by the mystique the movies cast upon middle-American dreamers. Who can blame them? According to this movie, Los Angeles has women dressed in gold lamé walking their pet lions down the street, bikini babe photo shoots on the sidewalk and the most tantalizing feature of all: a bar with those phones that look like big luscious lips at each table, on which the bar patrons can phone one another with the hope that the conversation will end in a sweaty boff.

There is much yearning for that ultimate goal in this film; the plot pretty much hinges on a quest for sex. Out of acute male desperation, Mark (Carrey) cheats on his virginal girlfriend with a hot and heavy vampire mistress who wants him for his pure virgin blood. This supernatural seductress has a cache of historically-dressed vampires in her basement (a cockney prostitute, a confederate soldier and some indeterminately dressed vamps) that have been her victims throughout the years. These costume party bloodsuckers on top of the desperate search for copulation and other tired gimmicks make the "humor" here stale and self-aware to the point that the audience feels callously neglected. The effeminate gay vampire butler, who is in many scenes, may drive you to eliminate movie viewing from your list of hobbies.

The punks, unlike the rest of the film, are top notch. During that obligatory montage which demonstrates to the slack-jawed viewer how totally insane LA is, the viewer is graced with a stocky punker dressed in a black-and-blue flannel and an outrageous mohawk/ape drape hybrid; this proto-grunge street rat ups the ante by having the tips of his 'hawk dyed blond. His female companion looks exquisitely dumpy in her drab gray thrift-store coat and a bleached blond haystack that nicely brightens her otherwise monochromatic uniform. In addition, there's a total assembly-line factory punk at the climactic Halloween dance. He has one of those Stray Cats rockabilly Vidal Sassoon hairdos and is clothed in a black leather motorcycle jacket, under which he wears a *Streetcar Named Desire*-era Marlon Brando white tank top...gorgeous. Mark also turns into a bit of punk as the movie drags on; for some reason, since he's only partial vampire during his transformation, his mood and dress veer towards a dangerous aesthetic. Essentially, he looks like the lost member of SF streetpunk combo Crime, what with his slicked-back hair, jet-black clothes and dark sunglasses. So, in closing, *Once Bitten* gets the punks right and everything else wrong. (*SC*)

ONE CRAZY SUMMER

Dir. Savage Steve Holland / 1986

A young cartoonist engages in beachfront antics.

This comedy desperately wants to party hard. While John Cusack and director Holland fail to recapture the magic they shared with *Better Off Dead*, this limp Izod fairytale still provides a wee bit of '80s funnybone gold. Bobcat Goldthwait teams with the late, talented Tom Villard (*Surf II*) as bumbling goofball twins, the requisite blow-dried don't-touch-my-car jock provides the necessary villainy and the great Curtis "Booger" Armstrong is a zany munitions nut. Surprisingly, the film's supreme performance comes from football actor John Matuszak, who wears a hot pink Tina Turner wig and red spandex pants while menacing Demi Moore. In a heated chase scene, he drives his mini scooter off a wharf, resurfacing with three fish impaled on his sissy-tinted liberty spikes.

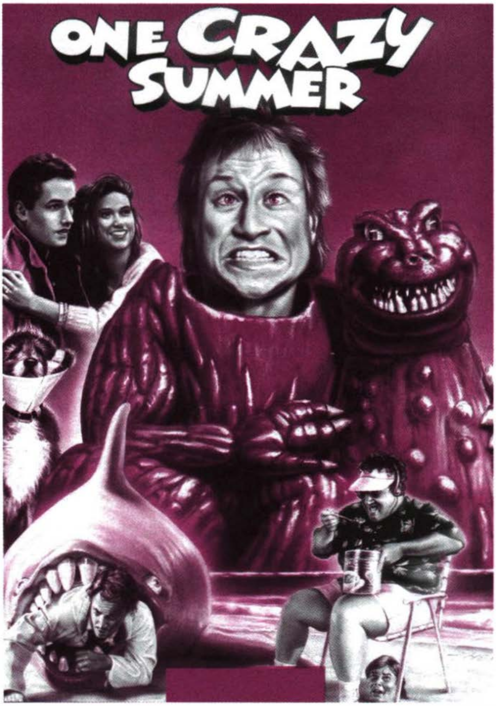
While this may sound like a barrel of monkeys, it ain't. After a couple well-placed Godzilla suit gags, the filmship sinks. Painful animated sequences include rhinos, bunnies and a squeezable caricature of Demi Moore's dreadlocked character. The film's poster features a cartoon image of a grinning sun sporting sunglasses, which makes as much sense as Jesus wearing a crucifix. (ZC)

ONE MAN FORCE

Dir. Dale Trevillion / 1989

A very tall bearded man punches and shoots his way to justice.

John Matuszak followed his career-establishing role as *The Goonies'* misshapen Sloth in this fearlessly formulaic action fiasco. Here, the family-sized football monolith is Jake Swan, a hardboiled defiant cop (check!) who's bent on vengeance (check!!) after his best friend/partner is gunned down (check!!!) by Hispanic drug lords (check!!!!!!). Swan follows a lead to the portentously named Blue Leather Bar, which proves to be one of the more incongruous nightclubs in Hollywood history. Middle-aged men in khaki shorts and dog collars indulge in disco-fueled dance floor collisions with ass-shaking bondage punks. The finest among the latter crew has his hair crimped into a foot-tall bleached fin. He chants "Kill! Kill!" while the bar's assembled clientele loses a 50-to-one brawl against the film's overgrown lead. A mostly-naked man in a birdcage shakes his ass to the rhythm of fists meeting skin.



In the pursuit of revenge, Swan will be kicked off the squad, slammed against a Cadillac at 80 MPH and hung by his wrists while being beaten with a shovel. He even fatally bludgeons a man with a Pepsi machine, but the most exciting aspect of *One Man Force* is the supporting cast. The prospect of seeing Richard Lynch, Ronny Cox and Charles Napier square off in a shootout is likely to excite any '80s straight-to-video obsessive. The other 99.7% of society will assume I just pulled three names out of a phone book. (ZC)

ONE NIGHT STAND

Dir. John Duigan / 1984

The lighter side of nuclear annihilation, Australian-style.

While picnicking camo street punks look on, a couple horny bachelors in Santa suits try their best moves on a young female duo. Later, the romantic hopefuls attend a Midnight Oil concert, where alopecian frontman Peter Garrett sweats and spazzes to the delight of the hometown crowd. A pacifist U.S. sailor goes AWOL during the show and hides out in the venue's catacombs, carrying with him the knowledge that World War III is about to take place. He befriends the Santas and their dates just in time for apocalyptic whimsy. The duration of the film meanders like an improvised play, with characters grumping, goofing and philosophizing while civilization crumbles around them. Later, the picnic punks have joined dozens of other refugees taking shelter in the Sydney Opera House, and can be seen trudging through various scenes in catastrophe-induced detachment. During mass evacuation, a monumental red mohawk is visible navigating the crowd like a frenzied shark, followed by several textbook punks with "Dickies," "Siouxsie" and "Killing Joke" painted on their leather jackets. (ZC)

ONE TRICK PONY

Dir. Robert M. Young / 1980

Paul Simon and his jam buddies trudge across
America's highways in search of relevance.

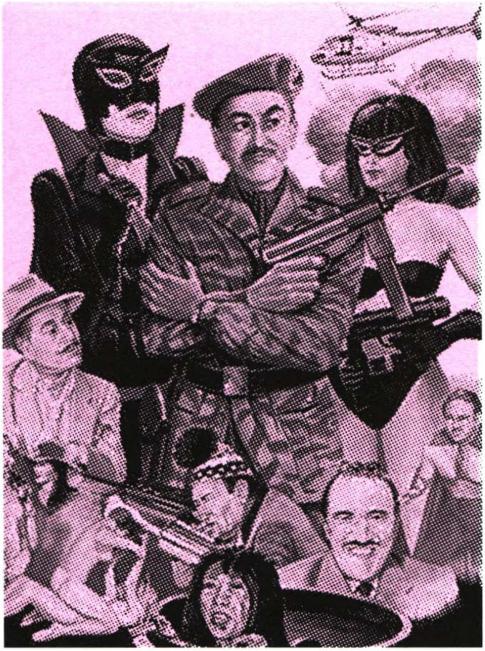
Why would two bleached punks in leather jackets be attending a Paul Simon concert? Same reason I'd be watching a Paul Simon movie looking for them; because there's a great big demon in the sky named God and he feeds off our suffering. Anyway, it turns out the punks are on hand to pogo to headliners The B-52's, a concert bill that makes this scene all the more confusing. Later, Simon's bandmates read a music review that covers the genesis of new wave. It's really uncomfortable to watch Simon say the F-word multiple times and bathe with women, but the film is worth watching to see Lou Reed and the great Rip Torn play major label patsies. Beyond these few memorable scenes, *One Trick Pony* is a lethargic look at mid-life desperation, divorce and the depression at the end of the road to artistic fulfillment. (ZC)

OPERATION MANTIS

Dir. Paul Naschy (as Jacinto Molina) / 1984

Spain's most popular werewolf actor directs
the ultimate female domination adventure.

Secret organization Matriarka has set Operation Mantis into motion: a plan to unleash a toxic agent that will wipe out every male on the



planet. It's up to three special agents of the Spanish government—a beautiful woman, a sissy and an ex-wrestler (director Naschy, best known for playing a werewolf in over a dozen films)—to save the lesser gender. Their mission takes them all across Europe, through brainwashing sessions and even into seductive liaisons with the morbidly obese.

At the film's climax, Naschy infiltrates a cocktail party disguised as a member of the hired entertainment, a punk band. He wears studded leather from head to toe, and by all appearances, the 50-year-old celebrity has actually shaved his head into a broad neon-fuchsia mohawk. The musicians kick off an upbeat synthesizer ditty and the covert agent dances like a monkey while singing a tone-deaf warning to his fellow operatives. He then dons a clown costume and wrestles an enormous man who has a blender for a right hand. This amputee giant is thrown out the second story window into a swimming pool and instantly explodes into meaty chunks. (*ZC*)

OSA

Dir. Oleg Egorov / 1985

A she-warrior roams the annihilated Earth
in search of wrongdoers.

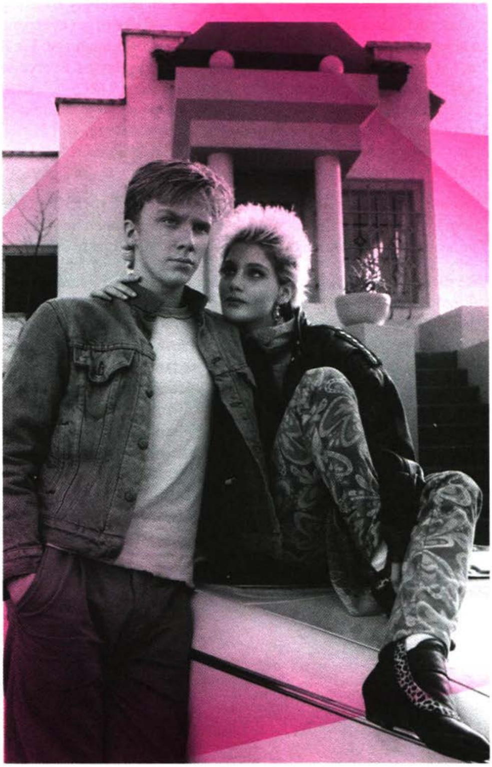
In a barren future destroyed by a worldwide scourge of contaminated water, a family is murdered by rampaging government thugs. The only survivor is wee daughter Osa. She's soon quasi-adopted by a benevolent old desert warrior named Trooper, who trains the preadolescent in the art of deadly combat. He also enjoys telling her all about "live cows." Ten years pass, Trooper is killed and Osa (now played by Kelly Lynch) sets out on the path of vengeance. Marauding villains stop at a church long enough for their leader to sexually menace a semi-coherent punk junkie. She wears a bullet belt, teased hair and a shirt that says "SO WHAT?" Later, Osa kidnaps Speedway, the grumpy Eurotrash boyfriend of megavillain Mr. Big, and the post-apocalyptic showdown begins.

Kelly Lynch may be best known in some Hollywood circles as "the actress who turned down the lead role in *Basic Instinct*," but here she really does give it her best shot. Shame about the material, which was so egregious that first-time writer/director Egorov was never heard from again. (*ZC*)

OUT OF BOUNDS

Dir. Richard Tuggle / 1986

A misplaced farm boy struggles to survive the LA streets.



Anthony Michael Hall plays Daryl Cage, a scrawny Iowa farm boy who leaves his broken home for the big city. On the plane he meets Dizz (Jenny Wright), a gorgeous new wave actress (aka waitress) who inexplicably flirts with him. In the airport, he gapes wide-eyed at valley girls, Elvis impersonators and a few scuzzoid punks. Distracted by the display, he accidentally switches duffle bags with a psychotic drug runner. Whoooops! Things get vicious quick and soon Daryl is on the run through those good old '80s mean streets. He enlists Dizz's aid, and she takes him back to a neon, ultra-modern apartment, which is cluttered with her plush penguin collection.

She redresses our farmboy hero in rocker camo and takes him out to hunt down some information. They speak with a chubsy punk in a diner and some mohawked lovebirds while glam rockers watch a middle-aged man breakdance on the street corner. They even stop to take in a Siouxsie & the Banshees concert.

It's surprising this film is so overlooked; it starred Hall at the height of his popularity, moves at a steady pace and the action scenes are genuinely tense and explosive. Certain moments almost reach the same level of sweaty desperation as legendary LA scum operas like *Angel* and *Savage Streets*. And nobody pulled off the absent-minded-but-resourceful heroine like Jenny Wright, who would stand out again one year later in Kathryn Bigelow's too-late-appreciated vampire film *Near Dark*. Wright continued to work through the mid-'90s, but seems to have shrunk into obscurity or, some say, insanity. She often took strong stances on seemingly arbitrary issues, saying in a 1987 *LA Weekly* interview: "I'd like to get everyone to speak Spanish. Street Spanish. It'll be the world language. We'll have 3D political pamphlets that come with little glasses. Everyone must take a vow of celibacy. Sex is an unclean thing." (*ZC*)

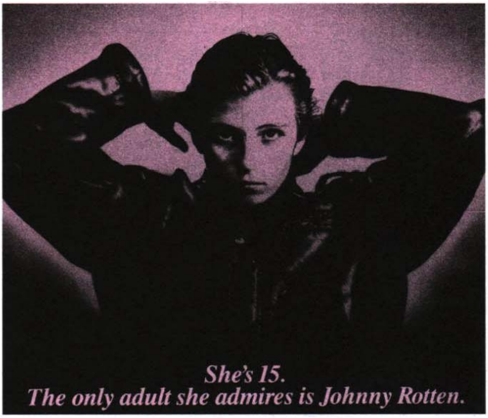
OUT OF THE BLUE

aka NO TURNING BACK

Dir. Dennis Hopper / 1980

A young tomboy turns to the chaotic dogma of punk rock when her hero Elvis dies. Her life becomes even less stable when her father gets out of prison and memories of sexual abuse start to surface.

The marketing campaign for *Out of the Blue* stressed its punk rock affiliations with the tagline: "The only adult she admires is Johnny Rotten," but originally the film was about a girl, her dad and the death of The King. Any trappings of punk in the film were added upon shooting in Vancouver, Hopper noted the cohesiveness of the punk scene there, and his young star's identification with it. But what happened as a result of meshing Neil Young (whose song was the film's namesake), Elvis and the Sex Pistols was a reappropriation of punk from the safety-pin crowd that called into question the very definition of punk. After all, when other UK punk rockers were listening to Television, the Ramones and the New York Dolls, the Sex Pistols were buying Eddie Cochran and Yardbirds records. Even the cab driver agrees: "Elvis was the first punk."



She's 15.
The only adult she admires is Johnny Rotten.

The film starts on or shortly after August 16, 1977, the day Elvis died. CeBe Barnes (Linda Manz) laments her hero's departure: "Everybody left me...my dad left me, Johnny Rotten left me, Sid Vicious left me...now you." It's a statement that poses a chronological error as the film is set when Elvis died, yet John Lydon hadn't yet quit the Pistols, and Sid Vicious wouldn't be dead until 1979. Her love of Elvis comes from her alcoholic father, who's been in prison for five years after a drunk driving accident that caused the deaths of a busload of schoolchildren. Her father's chaotic leanings prove to be hereditary; she develops an interest in the burgeoning punk scene and its inherent sense of recklessness. But despite some gig posters adorning her walls (Teenage Head, The Dishrags, Subhumans [of Canada] and Public Enemy), her involvement is limited to the regurgitation of punk slogans: "Destroy. Disco Sucks. Kill All Hippies. Pretty Vacant. Subvert Normality."

The punk centerpiece of the film is a club scene featuring a live performance by the Pointed Sticks (who go uncredited). CeBe runs away from her rural home and heads to the city to congregate with fellow punks, namely the Pointed Sticks' drummer Dimwit, who lets her bang away on his kit during a live rendition of their self-financed single "Somebody's Mom" (the strength of this single would get them signed to Stiff Records). Dimwit, aka Ken Montgomery, was the brother of famous punk drummer Chuck Biscuits (Social Distortion, Subhumans [of Canada], D.O.A., Black Flag, Descendents, etc), and died of a heroin overdose in 1994. The band broke up shortly after *Out of the Blue's* release.

Linda Manz (*Days of Heaven*; *The Wanderers*) had surprisingly few film roles to her credit considering her formidable natural talent. After an obscure 1984 West German film, she didn't resurface until Harmony Korine's *Gummo* in 1997. (*KJ*)

OUTLAW FORCE

Dir. David Heavener / 1988

A country music singer must rescue his daughter
and avenge his wife's murder.

Some filmmakers are a one-man legion, filling not just the directorial duties but also acting as their features' writer, editor, producer and lead. Such is the case with John Cassavetes, Timothy Carey, Orson Welles and many more celluloid legends. Storytellers like these have a firm grasp on their desired product, and are inspired enough to be capable of seeing their vision through at every level.

On the other hand, you have hambone auteurs like David Heavener, who fills all the above roles, but likely because he couldn't find anyone who'd work with him. This isn't as much of an insult as it may appear; many of the Great Video Age Moviemakers were in the same boat. It's just that Heavener's not one of them. A contemporary Christian musician and martial arts enthusiast, he apparently had his hands too full to master the craft of cinematic storytelling, but dove in head-first anyway, helming this (and several other pictures) almost single-handedly while making sure the viewer knows that he's the man responsible. Not many people would have the guts to claim responsibility for films like this and *Deadly Reactor*, but here, Heavener's name and face beam pridefully throughout. There's even a commercial on the VHS release of *Outlaw Force* asking you to buy his new album, much of which is included on the movie's soundtrack.

Our hero is Billy Ray (played by...yep, you got it), a Wild West stunt show actor and honky-tonk frontman. Some seriously greasy, studded rockers pour unleaded down a gas station attendant's pants and hold a match up to his crotch. Billy Ray intervenes with an unloaded shotgun and stirs up some of that baaaad trouble. Furious, the crudpunks rape and kill Billy Ray's pregnant wife and kidnap his daughter Holly, forcing the fun-loving cowboy to head out for vengeance. The thugs drag Holly back to a Hollywood hideout where they drink beer and make out with their quasi-bionic new wave girlfriends. Their leader, Washington, meets with a man in a limo who buys Holly for $5,000 and three grams of cocaine. Though he's far out of his element, Billy Ray befriends a tragic adult film actress who tells him that Washington hides out in "Blood Alley," where he sells kids into the child porn racket.

Called into the hunt for Holly is investigating officer Wainright, played by great screen behemoth Paul Smith (*Popeye; Pieces*). His new partner is Purella (Frank Stallone), a vegetarian who Wainright insults by calling "a college graduate." Taking a burger break from searching for his daughter, Billy Ray is attacked by Washington's nunchuk-wielding henchmen. One of them is a pudgy, curly-haired punk who dresses like Jennifer Beals in *Flashdance*. Still, the lowlife crime boss can't be judged by the company he keeps; he's one formidable villain, as evidenced by his "I HATE YOU" bumper sticker. Later, a new wave trasher with black lipstick and an anarchy symbol on his cheek harasses two women in an alley and gets his nuts shot off. (*ZC*)

OUTSIDER

Dir. Andrej Kosak / 1997

An uptight teen befriends the school punk.

Socially-awkward new student Sead is exposed to punk via initially terrifying classmate Borut. He follows his punk peer back to their band's practice space to watch in wide-eyed fascination as they rehearse. Sead is deeply inspired, tousling his hair and abusing his clothing in an effort to feel some of the personal freedom he's witnessed. The crew accepts him readily, an empowering personal shift that hits the occasional speed bump as he learns about everything from Sid Vicious (whose first name he adopts) to slampit etiquette during his first concert outing. On the club's wall is a large banner that reads "PUNK!" in tall red letters. Much to his parents' chagrin, Sead joins Borut's band, completing his lifestyle adjustment, but opening the door to unforeseen tragedy. This well-intentioned late entry is the only known Slovenian/Bosnian punk drama. (*ZC*)

OVERSEXED

Dir. Lester Jordan / 1986

Two horny humanoid extraterrestrials in New York City meet a pair of equally horny female Earth doctors.

Though I'm not a big smut hound, I've had to do my fair share of... er...hands-on research into punker pornos for the sake of this book, and I've learned a thing or two about some of the top performers. Jeanna Fine is a pretty big name in the porn biz and is still active making flicks to this very day. She's had a few different looks (and breast sizes) throughout her career and her first phase was when she was a new wave punkette. She's probably best known to SoCal record nerds as the cover girl on Chemical People's album *So Sexist*. She made something like 50 movies in the late '80s, and has performed in almost 400(!) total. Throughout Jeanna's new wave years, she had a neat blond wedged Chelseahawk with short ponytail, and aside from this vivid hairstyle, there's not too many punk attributes found in her roles. But directors like Lester Jordan don't hire gals like Jeanna Fine to *punk out*...they hire them to *put out*, and that she does indeed.

Thanks to this book, I've now seen two of the porn legend's early movies (the other is *Seven Minutes in Heaven*). Both are directed by the same guy, feature mostly the same cast and may have even been shot in the same bland apartment on the same damn weekend. But did I mention that *Oversexed* is a science-fiction porno featuring a guy in a Darth Vader helmet? Jeanna plays Princess Orgasma and her extraterrestrial associate is named Dart Laidher (Michael Knight, no relation to David Hasselhoff). He sometimes wears a purple cape with the Vader mask, even during sex. The pair rent an apartment next to a couple of horny female scientists who both happen to be fitted with a vagina-based alien-sensing device called an Inter-Uterine Device for the Detection of Aliens, or IUDDA for short. Sounds pretty cool, huh? Well, unfortunately, most of this movie consists of people doing it on a hide-a-bed plus a few awkward dialogue scenes shot in a stairwell. You never even get to see the aliens' spaceship, which I envisioned as one of those funny penis-shaped ones from *Flesh Gordon*. There are way too many desensitizing genital close-ups and, by the end, the endless interplanetary humping gets pretty tedious. I could hardly even muster a laugh when one of the scientists lustfully says, "Those aliens are somethin' else!" (*SH*)

THE PACKAGE

Dir. Andrew Davis / 1989

A marine tracks down an elusive rogue soldier
and discovers a sinister military plot.

Shot between Steven Seagal flicks, Andrew Davis' *The Package* is a decent Cold War thriller starring Gene Hackman as a Green Beret who gets involved in a complicated government conspiracy. The Hack plays Sgt. Johnny Gallagher who, after a bungled mission in West Germany, gets assigned to transport a rogue Airborne Ranger named Thomas Boyette (Tommy Lee Jones) to the States. Gallagher loses "the package" in the men's room of an airport and spends the rest of the movie tracking down the escaped ranger. He soon discovers a scheme to escalate U.S./Soviet tensions. Boyette is a crucial part of the conspiracy and seems to be planning on assassinating the president unless Gallagher gets ahold of him first.

The Cold War was already winding down by the film's release, but the dated script is still pretty entertaining, especially for those who like the international intrigue novels of Robert Ludlum and John le Carré. Like most of Davis' films, the cast features all sorts of recognizable actors like Joanna Cassidy, Pam Grier and John Heard. A fairly substantial portion of the movie follows Lt. Milan Delich, a Chicago cop played by Dennis Franz, as he helps unravel the intricate plot that also involves an undercover Marine who, disguised as a skinhead, has infiltrated the Illinois Nazi Party. To quote Jake Blues, "I hate Illinois Nazis." But anyway, a bunch of the white supremacists get arrested at a political demonstration and Lt. Delich wants to see if the undercover Marine was among them. When the lieutenant visits the holding tank, there's a quick shot of an angry dude with a mohawk stuffed in the cell with a bunch of other hoodlums. He's not one of the skinheads; just a young man in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong haircut. (*SH*)

PACKIN' IT IN

Dir. Jud Taylor / 1983

Gary Webber (Richard Benjamin) gets fed up with
the crime and pollution of Los Angeles and decides
to move the family to Oregon.

An overlong made-for-TV movie, its only saving grace being the punk segment at the beginning. In his one screen performance, Clinton Dean plays Johnny Crud, boyfriend to Gary's daughter Melissa (Molly Ringwald). He has white frosted hair, a skull-covered vest, a dog collar and can supposedly barf on cue. At the dinner table, he tells Gary and his wife, "We are the children of a decaying decadent society that your generation ruined...anymore veal?" He then sings a little song:

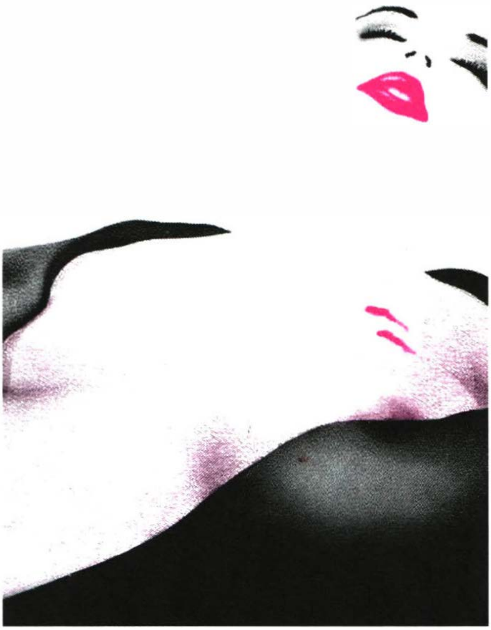
"I don't want no dogs and cats.
I don't want no welcome mats.
I don't want no lawns to mow.
This pad stinks, I'm gonna go."

Johnny's punk cronies hang out in front of The Webber's house to watch them move. They tell the family they are doomed. Gary tells them to get a job. Melissa is bummed that she has to move, and rebels by dying her hair red and wearing a jean jacket with studs on it. Later on, after falling for an Oregon survivalist, she washes the dye out and tells him that it was red due to a vitamin deficiency. Gary and his wife enjoy their new Oregon home by having constant lovemaking sessions. At the very end, Gary runs into another family escaping the city. They have a punk son named Lance. For Clinton Dean completists only!! (*BC*)

PALE BLOOD

Dir. V.V. Dachin Hsu / 1990

A vampire-hunting vampire meets a vampire hunter
in search of the same vampire.



This cardboard supernatural drama takes place almost entirely on the recedingly new wave stretch of Hollywood's Melrose Ave. A series of bloodsucking murders bring stern-but-affable bloodsipper Michael Fury (TV actor George Chakiris) to Los Angeles to investigate, where he's pitted against trash-talking documentarian Van, played by the untouchable Wings Hauser. At nightclub Drac's, preppies, metalheads and drastically spiked GBH-style punks rub elbows while the wateriest incarnation of Agent Orange gaze through their eyeliner and blast out limp ballad "Fire in the Rain." Fury is aided by a Transylvania-obsessed telepathic female detective, and the pair eventually uncovers the mystery after a loooong stretch of exposition and unnecessarily exposed boobs. Fury looks more Vegas Magician than Creature of the Night, but when his fangs are unleashed, he's an undeniable beast. Exploitation legend Sybil Danning appears in an enigmatic, silent two-second cameo. (*ZC*)

PALS

Dir. Lou Antonio / 1987

Two old men (George C. Scott and Don Ameche) find a large
sum of money that doesn't belong to them. They change
their identities and spend, spend, spend.

If you want to see top actors bumble around in a second-rate TV movie, then this one's for you. Why did Scott and Ameche do this? Wilford Brimley was able to find real motion picture work in the late

'80s, so why couldn't these two? This movie is total and complete fluff, with dumb subpar sitcom jokes. Ameche is told he can't bring his lawnmower with him when they go on the lam. The two get fake mustaches and wigs to hide their award-winning faces. Scott looks like a gigolo and Ameche looks like Pancho Villa. A purple-haired punk girl named Certainty hijacks a car with Scott's mom in it. Both the car and mom are eventually returned and all is forgiven. Certainty likes the old folks and decides to live with them. Mom likes the girl's hair so much that she gets her own orange mohawk. Later, Certainty pretends to be Scott's wife at a ritzy ball to teach him a hard lesson on friendship, and gets offended by some man-on-man CPR. Meanwhile, we all get disgusted by the stupidity of it all. (*BC*)

PANDEMONIUM

Dir. Alfred Sole / 1982

An unseen killer is picking off co-eds at a cheerleading camp,
and it's up to Mountie Reginald Cooper (Tom Smothers)
to stop him.

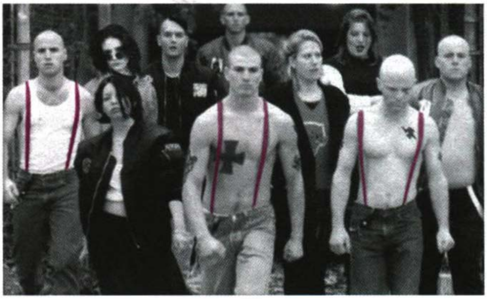
A spoof of slasher films where the hilarity comes from the performances of great character actors. Carol Kane is perfectly adorable as a telekinetic *Carrie* type. Judge Reinhold (with bleached hair) and Marc McClure play male cheerleaders. David "Squiggy" Lander plays thick-accented Pepe. This film also recruited many of Hollywood comedy troupe The Groundlings for bit parts. Paul Reubens is the Mountie's bitter sidekick, and his longtime comedy pal John Paragon plays a prisoner. Lynne Marie Stewart (Miss Yvonne from *Pee-wee's Playhouse*) plays a Japanese stewardess riding Air Tokyo, an airline where Godzilla serves drinks. Reinhold witnesses this by jumping on a trampoline filled with dynamite and flying a few thousand feet in the air. Phil Hartman and Edie McClurg also show up. Punks appear for a flash in a diner where twins purposely serve bad food. Features a shocking toothbrushing demise and a group of cheerleaders performing with vegetables before getting turned into a human shish kebab. (*BC*)

PARIAH

Dir. Randolph Kent / 1998

Seeking revenge, a young man shaves his head
and infiltrates a troubled skinhead gang.

Shot on a minuscule budget with nonexistent production values, the ambitious *Pariah* attempts a revenge drama set amidst a group of Los Angeles neo-Nazi skinheads. The gang spends most of their time drinking/spraying beer, annoying each other, picking on a retarded gang member, raping their own girlfriends and raping other people's girlfriends. And, naturally, they beat up Jews, women, African-Americans and homosexuals for kicks. The skinheads listen to all sorts of classic punk rock and hardcore like Minor Threat, Social Unrest, MDC and Reagan Youth but they don't listen to any Oi! or white-power crap. As a matter of fact, most of them don't really give a shit about Aryan pride or neo-Nazi politics and are into the skinhead scene just so they can be hateful assholes (one gang member is even chastised for reading *Mein Kampf*). Into this unpleasant bunch comes Steve (Damon Jones), an undercover non-skin who is out for revenge after his girlfriend committed suicide due to an extremely unpleasant encounter with the gang. Steve is put through a series of increasingly brutal tests before being tentatively allowed into the crew. Hate begets more hate as the gang's victims turn the tables and attack the skinheads, culminating in a lot of dead skins and a Mexican standoff at the group's clubhouse. While *Pariah* has its compelling moments, the direction is muddled and the characterizations are confusing. The cast is mostly made up of unknowns and supporting roles are filled by '80s punk rock scenesters Joe Wood (of TSOL) and Lynn Odell (of Cheap Perfume), who both play not-so-proud skinhead parents. (*SH*)



THE PARTY ANIMAL

Dir. David Beaird / 1984

A stupid, unattractive man is denied intercourse.

Sex-starved loser Pondo Sinatra (Matthew Causey) arrives at college with a festering need: "I'd sell my soul for a piece of aasss!!" He finds little success in the field of romance, no matter how many times he tries to zanily rape his female classmates. Neither the campus stud nor the wizened janitor is able to provide effective guidance. After several fruitless suicide attempts, Pondo devises new tactics involving transvestitism and African-American fashion approximation. Still no dice. Things get truly wild when he stumbles into "Dillinger's Punk Shop," where the animalistic proprietor and his painted new wave colleague assault Pondo with a belt sander and power drill. He leaves the store with handcuffs, a blue mohawk, knitting needles jammed through his cheeks and a goddamn hunchback. His friends flee in terror and Pondo is chased through the city streets by torch-bearing citizens in a punk parody of *Frankenstein*. With his fashion upgrade, not even the employees of the local cathouse will sleep with him. Having exhausted all other potential peer groups, he makes an effort to ingratiate himself to the campus lowlifes by arriving at a new wave-powered dance party with a staggering cornucopia of drugs. As disinterested teens pogo and spasm, Pondo rolls a seven-pound doober, downs 60 pills and passes out in a small mountain of cocaine. As with other scenes in the film, this characteristically crippled segment somehow features top-notch soundtrack material from bands like Buzzcocks, The Fleshtones and Chelsea. After completing his role here as a boner-driven retard, Causey would go on to earn a PhD in new media and performance theory, which hopefully got him laid. (*ZC*)

PARTY CAMP

Dir. Gary Graver / 1986

It's Squirrels vs. Falcons in the race to be
the coolest group at camp.

Boner City! This camp's got everything a horny dude can want. The two head camp counselors play games where she has a fly swatter and he's dressed as a bee. Listen to her yell, "Sting me! Sting me!" If you get sick, it's OK because the sexy nurse has S&M gear and her top is always unbuttoned. If the camp leaders take away the video cameras you strategically installed in the girl's locker room, then dress up as Darth Vader or a mohawked punk and demand it back. Sneak a peek at the nudist colony next door, or how about a little game of strip poker with the camp's clueless nympho. Let's beat those stupid jock Falcons at the skateboard race. Or, how about we don't laugh at the bus driver while he does terrible impressions of Rod Serling and Hunter S. Thompson. Thank you, Mister Graver, for not turning snobby after working with Orson Welles, and instead making this retarded gem. (*BC*)

PARTY PARTY

Dir. Terry Winsor / 1983

Various teens try to get laid.

Maybe if we say the word twice it will make it more fun. Nope and nope. With a promising opening of two cars racing to The Rezillos' "Flying Saucer Attack," it only turns to disappointment once the characters show up. Our British friends try to pull off an American-style wild comedy, but never once is it wild or comedic. The first problem is that this film doesn't have the requisite Belushi-esque fat slob. Sure, it has the fat homely girl that makes men recoil in horror, but you really need that crazy party animal character to make the events of the film lively. The second problem is that all the punk/new wavers in this film are all half-assed. There's a greaser dude in a studded jacket and Clash T-shirt. There's a girl with bleached hair. That's the extent of her craziness. Way to rebel against your parents, dudes. Some skinheads do show up in the kitchen and encourage girls to feel their shaved scalps. The soundtrack features many hits by The Go-Go's, The Specials, The Stranglers and adult contemporary artist Sting who does a cover of "Tutti Frutti." Feels like a real party where you don't know anyone and you wanna leave, but your ride says, "Oh. Let's just stay a little bit..." and you end up there all night, hating your wasted life. (*BC*)

LA PASTORELA: THE SHEPHERD'S TALE

Dir. Luis Valdez / 1991

A modern teenager imagines that she is part of
a group of shepherds traveling to Bethlehem to
meet the newly born baby Jesus.

Along with a few high-profile films like *La Bamba*, director Valdez has enjoyed a rich career in live drama and founded a politically active Chicano theater troupe called El Teatro Campesino. *La Pastorela* is Valdez's wild restaging of a traditional Latino Christmas play. Initially performed onstage by his troupe, it was filmed for the PBS TV series *Great Performances*. He utilizes a *Wizard of Oz*-type plot device in which a disgruntled modern-day teenager hits her head and gets transported back in time along with family and friends. They become part of a group of shepherds traveling to Bethlehem hoping to see baby Jesus in person. Their journey is obstructed by a bunch of pesky demons (or *diablos*) who have an anachronistic *Road Warrior* punk look. These diablos come out of a crack in the Earth, wear facepaint and animal hides, hiss a lot, temporarily possess human bodies and drive crazy vehicles. At one point, a blue-tinted demon possesses Miguel Sandoval (aka "King" Archie from *Repo Man*) who then becomes bloated, farts and sings a funny song. Robert (*Eating Raoul*) Beltran plays head demon Luzbel and Paul Rodriguez plays a diablo called Satanas. He has a sleeveless black leather jacket, chains, studs and gloves. He also has little devil horns, shoots blue flame out of his mouth, plays a violin and transforms into a black sheep with a studded choker. The demons all have similar S&M-inspired costumes, but Satanas is by far the punkest of the bunch. Fortunately the shepherds have a feathered friend looking out for them in the form of archangel San Miguel. Linda Ronstadt gives a very sincere performance as the angel and her costume resembles the Greek Goddess Nike, or maybe a more feminine version of the Hawkmen from *Flash Gordon*. She flies, has a magic conch shell, a gold helmet, white knee-high boots, shoots rays out of her eyes and wields a mean sword. This insane, one-of-a-kind Christmas treat also stars Cheech Marin as a flamboyant wise man, Father Guido Sarducci, Lupe Ontiveros, and Tex-Mex musicians Freddy Fender and Flaco Jimenez. (*SH*)

PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE

Dir. Tim Burton / 1985

A man embarks on a dangerous quest to rescue
his best friend the bicycle.

There is only one truth in this life: *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* is the most hilarious movie ever made. Anyone that disputes that fact is a liar and must be killed immediately. As we all know, Pee-wee Herman is the embodiment of everything good. Here, he embarks on a cross-country mission to reclaim his bike. Along the way, ol' P.W. will encounter tough-as-nails bikers, giant dinosaurs, wild animals, ninjas, chubby billionaires, escaped convicts, buckin' broncos,

tone-deaf hobos, furious butlers, unwanted romance, fibbing gypsies, clumsy Godzillas, basement-less Alamos, vengeful boyfriends and even an undead trucker! Also, watch for an intimidating cameo from Cassandra "Elvira" Peterson! Pee-wee's pals include the lovely Dottie (E.G. Daily), Speck the dog and world's oldest punk Amazing Larry, a tweed-wearing grandpa with a multi-color Exploited-style mohawk! Other punks are visible as blurry background extras in a few scenes, including *Suburbia's* Maggie Ehrig at the local police station. But wild-styled new wavers of any age are no visual match for the blazing comic supernova that is *Pee-wee*! Fun didn't exist until Pee-wee invented it, and this movie (written by the late Phil Hartman and some guy named "Paul Reubens") is the most funrocious, funtacular, fungorious funsplosion in the history of fun!!!! (*ZC*)

PENTHOUSE: ON THE WILD SIDE

Dir. Various / 1988

Naked ladies.

One of countless anthologies of softcore titillation that flooded the "special interest" section of video stores at the height of VHS mania. In the segment "Punk or Bust," horror/porn/exploitation megastar Michelle Bauer is a vinyl-clad hairstylist with striped mascara and a red poof mohawk. Through sultry barbering, she slowly transforms a nubile valley girl into a new wave leather slave. At this point, I expected them to discuss Russian literature, but they just have sex instead. (*ZC*)

PEPI, LUCI, BOM

Dir. Pedro Almodóvar / 1980

Three mismatched Spanish women ignore all social conventions in a quest for fun and satisfaction.

A lightheartedly disjointed work from Almodóvar's earliest era. A lackadaisical new wave combo called The Bomitomi Band is among numerous outrageous characters who populate the streets of Madrid. Good-natured Pepi (frequent Almodóvar lead Carmen Maura) is aroused when her friends beat up the cop who sexually assaulted her. The officer's wife is the quietly suffering Luci, who wants nothing more than to disappear. Pepi invites her to join a knitting circle taught by 16-year-old Bomitomi Band founder Bom. When the young instructor arrives for the meeting, she urinates on Luci, sending her into an uncontrolled fit of ecstasy. This act of bonding opens Luci's eyes to new doorways for liberating perversions, and the harried housewife soon finds herself at erection contests and other spectacles of the obscene. She takes to being led around on a chain leash by Bom, and becomes her band's official groupie. As the fledgling couple's relationship develops, Pepi documents them on film.

In one scene, The Bomitomi Band plays for a seated but enthusiastic crowd, Bom sneering out these lyrics:

> "I put my finger in your ass.
> I make you go down on me.
> I beat you up from time to time.
> I always make you come.
> If I fart in your face,
> you smile and call it love." (*ZC*)

A PERFECT COUPLE

Dir. Robert Altman / 1979

A doomed romance for the middle-aged.

Tragically underappreciated character actor Paul Dooley plays Alex Theodopoulos, a powerless, upright 40-something bachelor living under the oppressive rule of his traditional Greek father. Alex meets neurotic bohemian musician Sheila Shea (Marta Heflin) through a video dating service, and somehow their intense awkwardness blossoms into a sweetly retarded romance. Their differences create several problems, and the film explores each in acute detail. Dooley's performance is incredible, leading the viewer to actually believe he's a nigh-virginal loser. At one of Sheila's concerts, low-impact McLaren-esque punks sip wine among a sea of hippies.

Altman shot *A Perfect Couple* following his late '70s auteuristic boom, where he'd worked with Dooley and Heflin in *A Wedding*. When explaining why he chose to shoot this decidedly light picture, the director said, "I wanted to do a love story where the leads weren't two movie stars, but were just ordinary...schlumps." (*ZC*)

PERFECT TIMING

Dir Rene Bonniere / 1986

A typical New York evening of phony artists drinking wine and screwing.

No real plot here, but every female character under 30 gets totally nude. This takes place in an artist's loft where there's a lot of posing for erotic photos. The artist's bro likes to hump and walk around naked. Tough New York rocker Bonnie O. Bendix (get the reference here?) also likes to get full frontal and wants to make a music video of people doin' it. The video ends up being filmed in the loft and has women in bikinis flexing and lots of people in their birthday suits. Her band is very leather-clad and the guitarist has spiky hair. Not as fun as it all sounds: just a bad version of softcore with a sappy, mushy final act. (*BC*)

PERMANENT VACATION

Dir. Jim Jarmusch / 1980

A young man waxes philosophical.

Jarmusch's low-impact debut feature follows the New York meanderings of irritatingly self-reflective teen Allie Parker. The post-adolescent is a shiftless, jobless, jazz-obsessed nihilist, a spectator in his own life whose interactions with others are limited to anecdotes and babblings. Between visiting his mentally-ill mother and delivering existential rants to his suffering girlfriend, he stops off at a repertory arthouse theater to hover over the uptown punk concessionaire. Longtime Jarmusch collaborator John Lurie appears as a saxophonist, of course. East Coast New Cinema filmmaker Eric Mitchell—here as a chop shop fence—was at work on his *Underground USA* at the same time, with Jarmusch on sound recording duties. (*ZC*)

PETIT CON

Dir. Gérard Lauzier / 1984

A French boy is arrogant and pouty.

Don't watch. Don't waste your time. The main character loves the film *Diva*. He whines a lot, which sounds even worse in French. One plus about this film: no ménage à trois. Every other French movie seems to have some scene of three-way sex. Oh wait...there IS an attempted threesome scene. Never mind. The word "bourgeoisie" is said a lot. A drunk man on the subway complains about "punks, queers and niggers" taking over France. That would have made for a better film. There are punks at a scene in a bar. Why couldn't they have been bikers or something, so I wouldn't have had to watch this? But *you*...you're lucky. You don't have to. (*BC*)

THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT

Dir. Stewart Raffill / 1984

A time warp causes hard times for
two young soldiers.

1944: Two WWII navy boys Jimmy (Bobby Di Cicco) and Dave (*Streets of Fire* heartthrob Michael Paré) volunteer for a government radar cloaking trial. The plan, of course, goes awry and their entire aircraft carrier disappears in a haze of flashing lights and negative burns. They re-emerge in the modern world of 1984, bringing with them an apocalyptic lightning storm that threatens to shift/end our very reality. Stumbling and disoriented, the soldiers happen across a Nevada truck stop diner where two slightly less displaced crazy-quilt punks pull up alongside and act neighborly. Terrified by the youths' otherworldly appearance, our heroes nonetheless enter the restaurant and are immediately dazzled by color television. Unfortunately, a wound on Jimmy's hand begins to act as an electricity magnet, drawing destructive power from any nearby electrical source.

The film is based on a documented (though often denied) series of implausible government experiments, beginning with the actual Philadelphia Experiment in October of '43 (aka Project Rainbow and Operation Ghost) and carrying all the way through the increasingly bizarre Montauk Project of the early 1950s. In both, accidental time travel and physical teleportation were allegedly achieved, and in some reports of the latter, a quasi-sentient interdimensional creature was unleashed that is said to have destroyed a large portion of the Montauk, Long Island research station. No shit, look it up. (*ZC*)

PHOENIX THE WARRIOR

aka SHE WOLVES OF THE WASTELAND

Dir. Robert Hayes / 1988

Women with big guns and little clothes battle for survival.

The future. A bacteria plague has wiped out all men on Earth, and apparently all the unattractive women. Rampaging desert gangs don high school biology class goggles and tear across the badlands in souped-up dune buggies. At the camp of villainous mutant Reverend Mother, bikini-clad Phoenix rescues a Keela, a young prisoner who—through an unexplained miracle of post-apocalyptic science—has been impregnated with a male fetus. On the run from the Reverend's butchpunk lackeys, our heroines encounter a clan of topless bathing amazons who help deliver the baby. Time passes, the child matures and Phoenix trains him in the art of war, leading to the inevitable climactic confrontation.

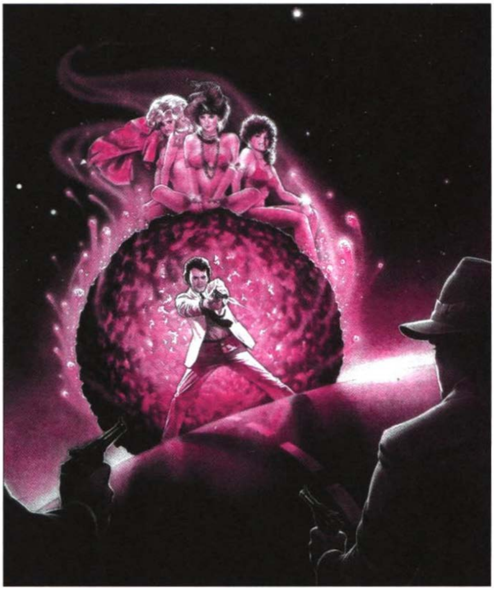
This is an unusually earnest contribution to the '80s top-heavy she-warrior canon, and features some of the weirder staples of the genre. TV-worshipping radiation creatures, children imprisoned in birdcages and, naturally, pit battles to the death. The characters sport names like Riptide, Mohawk and Scratch, and in Phoenix's world, crimped hair, shaved underarms and breast implants are the foundations of wasteland chic. (*ZC*)

THE PINK CHIQUITAS

Dir. Anthony Currie / 1987

A pink meteor named Betty lands in tiny Beamsville U.S.A.
and turns all the town's women into sex-crazed nymphos.
Private eye Tony Moreda Jr. (Frank Stallone) is the only
man who can stop them in this late-'80s sci-fi spoof.

It's a telling sign when you see "Starring Frank Stallone" in a film's opening credits, and this pink-n-lime green-infused sci-fi comedy is



certainly no exception. There's plenty of '80s-cum-'50s iconography (Cadillacs, poodle skirts, ducktail hairdos and nerds galore), a lame Barney Fife-style deputy and a few tons of props that look like they came from a Toys "R" Us clearance blowout. When the women become sex-crazy, they adopt a punk look, complete with teased hair, reflective tights, animal print skirts and studded wristbands. Everything here is blasted gleefully overboard, including the ragtag new wave chic of the cashier at the local drive-in, which is of course running the fictional cinematic masterpiece *Zombie Beach Party*. A Casio-rock nightclub scene features caged dancers, helium balloons and a spastic mustachioed guy gyrating hard in spandex. The effects are fun in that neon, direct-to-video way, but that's about all there is to this forgettable film. Heck, there isn't even any nudity, and for a supposed "sex comedy," that's a valuable asset. It was filmed in Canada and apparently nominated for two Genie Awards for its sound design! With music by—you guessed it—Frank Stallone! (*KK*)

PINK NIGHTS

Dir. Phillip Koch / 1985

What's a man to do when his mom's out of town and all three
of the women he's dated decide to move in with him?
Just what is a man to do?

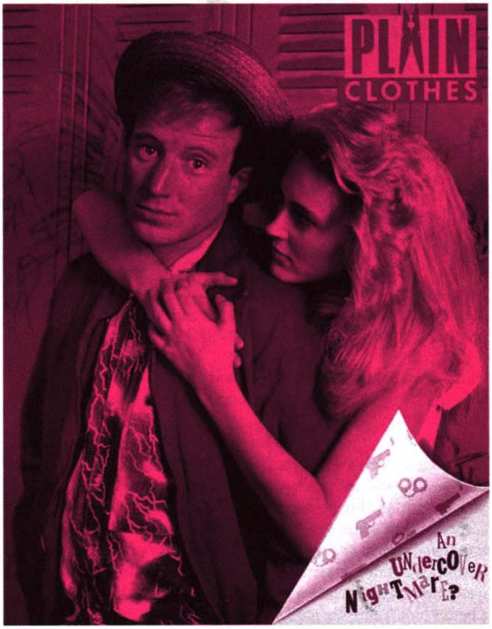
All indie comedies are sort of the same: stale jokes with no set-up and people who have never done comedy before in their lives. Some people are natural comedians. Most people aren't. This film is full of the latter: folks that wouldn't know comic timing if it hit them in the genitals. Am I being too mean? No. If you're gonna waste 90 minutes of my life with a comedy, at least make me laugh. Once. There's a punk leaving the record/clothing store where a girl helps our hapless hero Danny purchase red pants with zippers all over them. Her friends dare her to ask him on a date. She invites him out to a punk club. A man with a mohawk works the door. There's a character named Zero who sometimes dresses punk, and other times wears a goddamn scarf. Yet he still calls a Brit in a Clash shirt and dogcollar a "poseur." This causes a punk riot that ends up chasing Danny down the street. He refers to them as a "rock and roll hit squad." Later, one of the girls tells him he should get an earring and a purple streak in his hair. New wave band Bohemia plays at a high school gym while breakdancers bring the boom boom. There's a scene where Danny and a rich girl eat pizza. I like pizza a lot, so this moment worked for me. *Pink Nights* is like a failed sitcom smashed against a C-minus high school project. (*BC*)

PLAIN CLOTHES

Dir. Martha Coolidge / 1988

A detective must go undercover as a high school student
and get evidence to prove his brother's innocence.

This film has a major problem right off the bat: there is no way in hell that anyone would ever be tricked into thinking that Arliss Howard is a teenager. Howard was 34 when this movie was made. And he looks 34 no matter what fluorescent guitar-pattern shirt and straw hat you make him wear. In a film like *Hiding Out*, this plot makes sense because Jon Cryer was 22 years old and pretending to be a teenager. But here? Forget it. *Plain Clothes* does feature many great actors: Seymour Cassel is Howard's partner, Robert Stack is the school's principal and granite-faced legend Abe Vigoda is a teacher who gets an "I like it doggie style" sign slapped on his back. There are punks throughout; they hang in the background of a few scenes at school, a kid sports a mohawk at the carnival, Howard dresses punk on the first day of class, etc. But the real powerhouse is George Wendt as the shop teacher. Now there's a man I can believe in. (*BC*)



PLAYING BY HEART

Dir. Willard Carroll / 1999

The romantic tribulations of a logorrheic family.

With such a huge ensemble cast, *Playing By Heart* takes almost half the running time to establish its characters, jumping around to various scenes with the main players which sets the stage for the too-much-information psycho talkathon that follows. Take, for example, the relationship between Joan (Angelina Jolie) and Keenan (Ryan Phillippe), who meet at a dance club. Keenan keeps to himself; dancing amidst other loners and a whirling, green bi-hawked head. Joan sees him while yelling at her ex-boyfriend over the phone. After she hangs up she bullies Keenan into hanging out, blabbers nonstop and falls in love with him, all before he shows a bit of interest in her.

The movie feels like a play, densely populated with set pieces that only come together in the last ten minutes. And, when the denouement finally arrives, there's really no point. The mega-happy ending feels unrealistic because we haven't seen any growth; it's like the friend who claims that "this time it's so different" with every person they date only to end up falling back into the same pattern of behavior. Much as one would do in that situation, it's best to just roll your eyes and get as much entertainment as is possible from the lives of these pathetic characters. (*LAF*)

POINT BREAK

Dir. Kathryn Bigelow / 1991

Keanu goes undercover as a surfer to bust up
a gang of bank robbers.

I have a borderline irrational reverence for this film. People may scoff or chuckle when I heap praise on *Point Break*, but I just silently judge their poor taste. Part of my love is adolescent nostalgia; I snuck into this film after seeing the Kevin Costner dud *Robin Hood* and was instantly enamored with what I saw on the screen. Time has not tarnished my fixation. Maybe because it's so *good*.

Keanu Reeves is Johnny Utah, a freshly-scrubbed FBI agent new to the Los Angeles bureau. He's partnered up with Angelo Pappas (Gary Busey), a wily old veteran and resident paunchy loose cannon. These two are assigned to collar the Ex-Presidents, a crew of bank robbers who wear masks of former U.S. heads of state and are extremely elusive, having hit 27 banks in three years with nary a clue to be found in regards to their identities. Utah, prompted by Pappas' theory that the Ex-Presidents are surfers, grabs a board and goes undercover to try and ferret out the beach bums. But the mystery aspect of the film seems immaterial. It's merely a backdrop for some quality male bonding, which has a different tone than most typical action fare, as Utah becomes spiritual bros with Bodhi the Zen surf guru (Patrick Swayze). Where we could be buried under loads of gay jokes and exploding strip clubs, we get conversations about the spirituality of surfing and Busey's wholesome goofiness.

The characters in this film are perfectly cast, which aids in the film's success. Reeves is the perfect bohunk, and Swayze is the ultimate bleached out-scruffy surfer. The love interest (Lori Petty) is a no-nonsense wave nymph who serves as the voice of reason. And the jock metal surf punk gang, featuring Anthony Kiedis and *Suburbia's* Chris Pedersen, is appropriately off the rails. All the action clichés are present (John C. McGinley as ball-busting boss man Harp is particularly excellent), but rather than feeling shopworn, they feel comfortable and warmly familiar. And the film is really gorgeous, swimming in the sun-drenched haze of California; many of the shots are a dusty monochrome of reds and browns (smog finally did something right). The story is simple and brisk, and moves along efficiently.

With the formula in place, director Bigelow goes wild with the action sequences, including an all-male air ballet, a brutal foot chase through the streets and homes of suburban LA, and lots of slow-motion surfing. Lots of surf *punks* too, the best of which is a crinkly geezer at a party, hanging in the corner with his long blond hair and leather motorcycle jacket. And *Point Break* features what could be the punkest image ever committed to film: a man in a Ronald Reagan mask using a gas pump nozzle as a flamethrower to torch a stolen car. This film is tightly wrapped, a concise piece of supreme entertainment. It's a great stand-in for any lost security blankets or stuffed animals you had as a kid. *Point Break* rolls you in a cocoon of fuzzy familiarity and comfortable, worn-in nostalgia for action movies that had moxie and a heart. (*SC*)

POLICE ACADEMY 2: THEIR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Dir. Jerry Paris / 1985

Mahoney and the gang must stop
a group of punks from terrorizing the city.

Seven films. A cartoon series. Toys. Even after all this, these films get an undeservedly bad rap. Most of them—this one included—are very funny and bursting with talented comedians. People also forgot how charming and likeable Steve Guttenberg is as a lead actor. Here he goes undercover as a biker type to fit into Zed's (Bobcat Goldthwait) punk-n-biker gang whose home base is the city's old zoo. You'll cheer along with them when Mahoney and Bobcat have a knife fight in a bear cave. The punks ruin a street fair by starting a riot and eating all of the concessions. They also rough up the police chief (Howard Hesseman), spike his hair into a blue mohawk and spraypaint his clothes. Tackleberry forces a child to attend school at gunpoint. Michael Winslow makes gross-out sound effects while a preppy couple eats. This is also one of those PG films with boobs, a long-forgotten trend that I bet 12-year-old boys wish was still in style. (*BC*)

POLICE ACADEMY 3: BACK IN TRAINING

Dir. Jerry Paris / 1986

The further hijinks of America's favorite armed stumblebums.

Bobcat Goldthwait reprises his role as spazzoid lunatic Zed. Having been thwarted as a punk crimelord in the last installment, he unexpectedly joins the new recruits at Commandant Lassard's police academy, riding in on a motorcycle adorned with a painted mohawked skeleton and the word "suicidal." On campus, Zed is assigned to bunk with undersized neurotic dweeb Sweetchuck (Tim Kazurinsky), ironically the same man he'd terrorized in the previous film. Sweetchuck is understandably terrified, but Zed attempts to soothe him by screaming in his ear: "I used to be a real jerk...but now I'm a PEOPLE guy!" Though his manic behavior hasn't abated, his newfound dedication to peacekeeping is impressive. He even helps an old lady cross the street...but his former gang pals show up in a neon convertible with mannequin legs jutting out of the trunk. Zed heaves the grandma into the car, introduces her as "the future Mrs. Zed" and the whole crew peels out. Elsewhere, Mahoney flirts with ladies and Jones makes bweep-bwoop-bwapp noises. (*ZC*)

POLICE ACADEMY 4: CITIZENS ON PATROL

Dir. Jim Drake / 1987

Those bumbling protectors of the people decide to hire folks off the street to ensure the safety of the city and the hilarity of this film.

Four films in and still kicking out the laffs. This one has the added bonus of a gratuitous skateboarding montage. Bobcat Goldthwait returns as wi-i-ildman cop Zed. He shows up at an old-folks home wearing a vest that says "Death by Tire Iron" on the back. Above this brutal slogan is a giant skull with a furry blue and red mohawk. Laura (Corinne Bohrer, *Joysticks; Surf II*) stops him, thinking he's a convict. He proves he's a cop and says, "Regular human clothes make me look more comfortable." Zed then slams some fart poetry for the elders. Soon a whirlwind romance forms between Bobcat and Laura. Underneath a tree he strums her this song on his electric guitar:

"It's getting to the point now when I'm with you
I no longer want to have sharp things stuck in my eye.
Your mother, my mother ain't never looked like Florence
Henderson..."

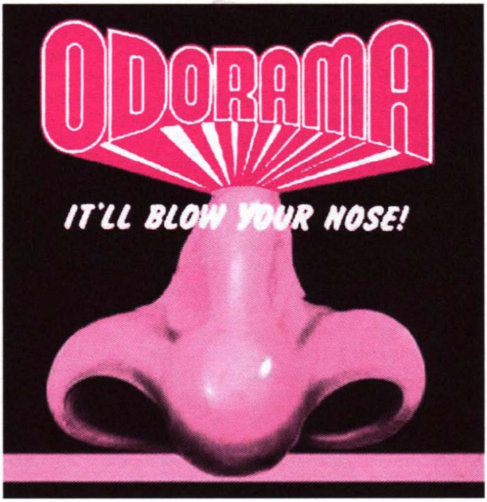
At the end of the film there's a hot air balloon chase. Bobcat lands his balloon and a guy in a striped shirt with a mohawk can be spotted briefly in the surrounding crowd. (*BC*)

POLYESTER

Dir. John Waters / 1981

"Smell your way through the feet and feces!"

Filmed in Magnificent ODORAMA! Journey, if you will, through the odiferous world of Francine Fishpaw (Divine) and her lovable family. Her husband Elmer proudly runs the only porn theater in their corner of suburbia, and her neighbors are kind enough to pray for her salvation on her front lawn. Her two children would make any parent proud: Dexter's a glue-sniffer and is secretly "the Baltimore Foot Stomper"; and Lulu is a garden-variety vapid teenage whore who dances and sings for beer along with her boyfriend Bobo (Stiv Bators of the Dead Boys). As far as "women's" films go, it's a pretty standard tale. Francine's husband runs off with a blonde, her maid wins the lottery, her daughter gets pregnant and then sent off with nuns, her son gets thrown in jail, and of course Francine starts hiding liquor all over the house to hide the shame of her extreme thirst. Since Francine has a peculiarly developed sense of smell, it seemed only right that it was filmed in Odorama, meaning if you were lucky enough to see it in the theater, a special card would be given to you upon entry. When the indicator number came



onscreen, you'd scratch the corresponding number on the card for delicious smells like pizza, flowers, glue, grass and shit.

This film was the John Waters send-up of Douglas Sirk melodramas such as *Written on the Wind* and *Imitation of Life*, and the acting is over the top even for Divine. It's a masterpiece in the truest sense of the word. When asked at a film retrospective about casting Stiv Bators for this movie, John Waters answered, "I love punk rock and I loved Stiv Bators. He was just about the sweetest person I ever met." Sadly, this was also the last movie Edith Massey was in. The adorable little actress passed away in 1984. (*JH*)

POPULATION: 1

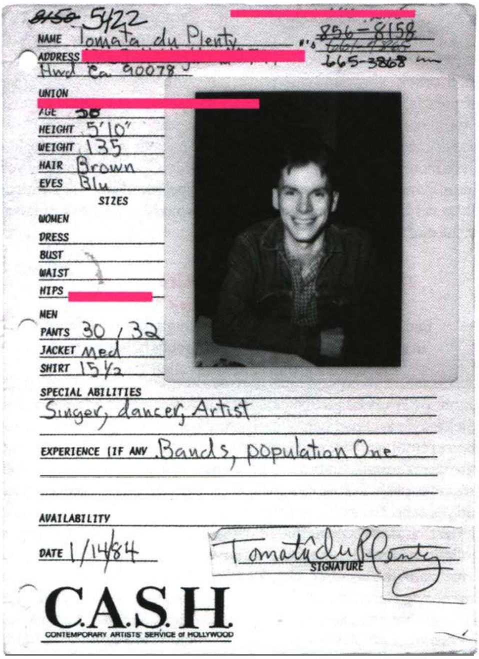
Dir. Rene Daalder / 1986

Screamers singer Tomata Du Plenty stars in this bizarre post-apocalyptic musical revue.

The film that broke up the Screamers! The band's last performance was at the Whisky a Go Go in 1981, and much of this performance was captured by Dutch filmmaker Rene Daalder (*Massacre at Central High*), who used it as a selling point for his bizarre, largely unseen atomic musical epic *Population: 1*. The film is pretty much a one-man show, with the late Tomata Du Plenty as a civil servant who happens to be the last man alive. He's haunted by crazy hallucinations that feature fellow Screamers and other LA scenesters like Tupperwares drummer Eldon Hoake (who had since rechristened himself El Duce of The Mentors); Avengers singer Penelope Houston; plus Fluxus artist Al Hansen and his young grandson Beck.

Punk fans hoping to see "a Screamers movie" will be disappointed. Other than a few minutes of live Screamers footage (performing "I Wanna Hurt"), the music is written by Daniel Schwartz and Rene Daalder, with Screamers' principal songwriter Tommy Gear given very little to do other than appear as a bit actor. The result is a grating synth and bass soundtrack with the occasional tone-deaf showtune thrown in.

The film—which was shot on video and later transferred to celluloid—appears to have the production values of a *Red Dwarf* episode (production designer and Screamers drummer KK Barrett has since gone on to prove himself with films like *Being John Malkovich, Lost in Translation* and *I Heart Huckabees*), and there's no narrative trajectory; it's just Tomata musing on the events that led him to his isolated, neurotic present state. How I've managed to sit through a movie this annoying three or four times is a mystery to me, but I'm guessing it has something to do with Sheela Edwards' spirited rendition of '20s song "Jazz Vampire," which is truly the artistic highlight here. Edwards joined the Screamers as a backup singer in 1979 and she gets a lot of screentime here. Also of interest is the fact that in this alternate universe, El Duce is one of few people chosen to repopulate the earth after the apocalypse. This film is clearly the product of an insane mind.



~~8150~~ 5422 [redacted]

NAME Tomata du Plenty

#'s ~~856-8158~~ ~~[illegible]~~ 665-3868

ADDRESS [redacted]

Hwd Ca 90078

UNION [redacted]

AGE 38

HEIGHT 5'10"

WEIGHT 135

HAIR Brown

EYES Blu

SIZES

WOMEN

DRESS

BUST

WAIST

HIPS [redacted]

MEN

PANTS 30 / 32

JACKET Med

SHIRT 15 1/2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Singer, dancer, Artist

EXPERIENCE (IF ANY Bands, population One

AVAILABILITY

DATE 1/14/84

Tomata du Plenty

SIGNATURE

C.A.S.H.

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' SERVICE of HOLLYWOOD

The Screamers had their foundations in performance art and theater, so the structure of the film isn't necessarily ill-fitted to the band. Tomata had briefly been a Cockette in SF, was a member of Seattle performance troupe Ze Whiz Kidz in the early '70s, and in 1974 he formed the Tupperwares, an all-drag vocal trio with Rio De Janeiro and Melba Toast (who later was reinvented as Tommy Gear). It was upon moving to LA in 1977 and recruiting new members KK Barrett and David Brown (later replaced by Paul Roessler) that they changed their name to the Screamers after being threatened with a lawsuit by the Tupperware trademark owners. As one of the most influential bands in the nascent punk scene in LA, Tomata's frenetic onstage persona would go on to be copied by countless imitators, including Jello Biafra and Danny Elfman.

Their work on *Population: 1* started as a determination to release their debut album in video format. They met up with Rene Daalder, a filmmaker who seemed a good hand at raising money. But their "video album" never materialized. Daalder's own obsessions took precedence and he started grooming the Screamers into a repertory stable for his own multimedia projects. Initially, *Population: 1* was supposed to have music composed by Tommy Gear, but as the story goes, Daalder played the band members against each other until a fatal falling-out occurred between Gear and du Plenty. Gear walked off the picture halfway through shooting. It was during filming that Tomata revealed himself to be HIV positive. He died August 20, 2000 of an AIDS-related illness. *(KJ)*

PRAISE

Dir. John Curran / 1998

Two lonely losers decide to lose together.

A strong, refreshingly unpretentious indie drama about Australian lowlifes. Directionless self-loather Gordon falls for Cynthia, an impulsive fair-weather junkie with severe eczema. Though he's already at rock bottom, he manages to spiral further downward under her influence, blindsided by her nymphomania, rage and casual narcotics use. At one point, Gordon's romantic frustrations manifest in a tantrum, during which he pulls a bewildered mohawked punk from a taxi and throws him to the concrete. In addition to its already-considerable depression ammo, the film also tackles abortion, domestic abuse, asthma, racism and the increasing emotional impotence that has led to the worldwide death of romance. *(ZC)*

PREDATOR 2

Dir. Stephen Hopkins / 1990

A boatload of '80s era second bananas face off against
the ever-stealthy extraterrestrial Predator on the crime-torn
streets of Los Angeles.

Danny Glover runs the show as a frustrated police lieutenant failing to rid LA of its standard menaces: drug lords, execution squads, shoot-outs, etc. Imagine the headache when an alien manhunter is added to the mix. Bill Paxton, Ruben Blades and the rest of the force offer little help, and Gary Busey's covert alien-hunting organization only manages to complicate things further.

Though written by the same team that scripted the first film three years earlier, *Predator 2* is a major step forward in unnecessarily complex scenarios. And don't get started on the dialogue; when the head of the LAPD states that police involvement in the Predator case has been withdrawn, Glover responds, "Yeah, I get it. You're cutting off my dick and shovin' it up my ass." Danny!! In its only line of dialogue, the alien itself later concurs in a hollow rasp: "Shiiit happensss."

Haitian voodoo marijuana pushers, white trash Southern yokels, shirtless Brazilians with cocaine all over their faces...few films after the '70s are this loaded with embarrassing ethnic stereotypes and male adrenaline. But the best (and most inexplicable) example comes in the form of the film's lone punk, a mohawked Samoan in shades and handcuffs who headbutts the rookie working the front desk at the precinct. *(ZC)*

PRETTY IN PINK

Dir. Howard Deutch / 1986

Screenwriter/producer John Hughes spews his bile all over romance in this limp teen drama, which is packed with whining stereotypes, wacky clothes and a magnificent Spader performance.

Hughes may be the finest propaganda filmmaker of our generation. He fills his movies with broad stereotypes, black-and-white class divides and stories that are boiled down yet severely undercooked.

The ideas on romance and teenagers presented in *Pretty in Pink* reach the heights of fantasy and fairytales...except fairytales are more poignant and complex. A simple boy-meets-girl story is presented; however, the principals involved, played by Molly Ringwald and Andrew McCarthy, respectively resemble a new wave dishrag and a doughy, coked-up newborn babe.

The ensuing "romance" kicks off with what may be the first computer hook-up in the history of love (obviously, a bad sign). Complications ensue in the form of would-be stalker Duckie (as played by Jon Cryer), and some mush about Ringwald (who, by the way, dresses like a riot grrrl/Florida jew) being from the wrong side of the tracks. Let's discuss this Duckie character for a moment, who exemplifies Hollywood's continuing tradition of creating characters the audience is supposed to think are eccentric and interesting, but in fact are completely and utterly obnoxious. Duckie is a perfect example of Hughes' manipulative teenage netherworld, in which the repellent spastic dork is portrayed as the underdog antihero. The only viable and interesting character in this film is Steff, as played by the untouchable James Spader. Oozing total contempt and disdain for every living thing (and doing so with style), this guy is like an oil slick in white linen. Spader's performance is captivating, as he's the only character with a pulse in the entire movie. As one fellow viewer suggested, Spade should have formed a relationship with Ringwald's badass friend who smokes cigarettes in gym class and tells a priss she hopes her breasts "shrivel up and fall off." Now that's a movie I'd like to see.

To its benefit, there are tons of period-detail punks populating this celluloid flatline. We have a spiny-headed, suit-coated thrasher in the segregated "punks only" high school lunch area; a Dweezil Zappa cameo as a dunderhead enraptured by some tepid new wave reggae; and Annie Potts with liberty spikes (begrudgingly counted despite the fact that she's pure fashion punk, posing out to the max). We also have what is in my mind the finest punk extra of all time; as preppy blob Blaine (McCarthy) makes his way through a punk club, he runs into a towering bleached-out goth Frankenstein's monster sporting a trench coat and a beautiful mane of stark white hair. He subsequently asks Blaine, in reference to his jacket, "Yer mother make this for you?" Gorgeous. Plenty of mohawks and spikes abound in the punk club, as well as some lukewarm new wave rockabilly courtesy of The Rave-Ups.

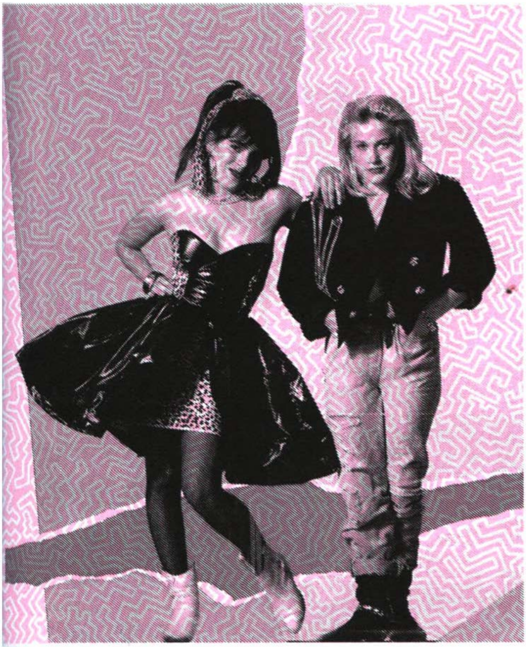
All the characters in this movie should die alone (excepting Steff), but Hughes rewards them with genuine love. These romantic emergences are unaffecting due to the fact that the characters are merely doorknobs hanging on the clothesline plot. Even Duckie gets a tossed-off prep girl in the end, and the denouement involving Ringwald and McCarthy's reunion is like two coffins falling into each other. The mundane culture clash commentary the movie exudes falls flat, as all the characters are equally boring so they should easily get along with each other. Sex Pistol shoes and bolo ties do not give you a personality. They merely make you look like a character in a John Hughes movie, which inevitably means you are a living, breathing teenage stereotype who follows the script like a rat in a maze, trying to reach that moldy cheese (aka Love) at the end. (*SC*)

PRETTY SMART

Dir. Dimitri Logothetis / 1987

Bad girl Daphne must go to boarding school in Greece in the hopes she'll become a proper lady, but instead befriends a group of misfits called The Subs.

Daphne (Tricia Leigh Fisher) is sure a wild one with her mad Stevie Nicks style and bad behavior. During her boarding school's opening ceremonies, she pretends to be pregnant, chews tobacco and bites her toenails. Later, she rocks out with the gardener. Patricia Arquette plays Zero, a member of The Subs (short for "subhumanoids"), who has to be taught the ways of love. She's shocked to know that there's no actual blowing during a blowjob, and further enlightened while watching a movie called *Rumpleforeskin*. And what's an '80s comedy without a little racism? So let's throw in a mumbling Eastern Indian teaching English class and a black girl asking where the soul food is at chow time. There are also many scenes of nudity. The dean at the school secretly films the girls changing and having sex, and then sells the tapes to foreign businessmen. A guy goes down on a girl, then says, "Look at me...I'm Groucho Marx." To get even with the dean, Daphne plans a little mayhem at the weekend dance. The smooth jazz band stops their set and rips their suits off. Underneath they're punks, albeit pretty tame ones in torn multicolored tank tops. The singer says, "Don't worry. We are professional musicians." A giant backdrop of a skull lowers to the stage and a huge cake filled with pastel balloons is



wheeled out, much to the dismay of the audience. Two body builders with dyed hair then carry out Daphne in a plastic dress while the band plays a song that's about as punk as B.B. King. (*BC*)

THE PRINCE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Dir. Ron Nyswaner / 1988

Keanu Reeves is a stand-alone freako
in a small town filled with squares and stiffs.

The problem with whimsy, eccentricity and general weirdness in film is that it's forced. Show an old coot who gets weather reports from a yard gnome with a soundtrack of woodblocks and wind chimes, mix in some white picket fences and voilà, eat up the latest in whimsical indie dreck. *The Prince of Pennsylvania* is a forebearer to a long line of quirky indie dramas and comedies. The setting is a dried-up small town, where creative souls are stifled and left to the fringes and the characters are either staunch traditionalists or out-there freaks.

Keanu Reeves is the outcast son in a family dependent on the local coal mine. His appearance and general demeanor are frowned upon by his cranky dad (Fred Ward) and the rest of the squares that live in town. Keanu's love interest (Amy Madigan) really takes the fruitcake; she's an older woman, eccentric as hell, who deals pot out of a moldering ice cream shop. Everyone is repressed and unhappy, which leads to extramarital affairs and lots of shouting matches between the characters. Okay, so the film is supposedly exposing the rot that lies underneath Anytown, U.S.A., unfortunately, in the middle of the histrionics, the film begins to sink into the fuzzy gauze of inertia.

Luckily, the punks come fast and furious when Keanu stumbles upon their junkyard lair. They're hanging out listening to bad metal (why is it that movie punks rarely listen to punk?), appearing surly until one of them offers to cut Keanu's hair (the resulting cut is a real beaut, just one side of his ungainly mop shaved clean). There are some generic mohawks and a blond bombshell punk goddess mixed in with dirty biker types, who reappear to bust up a high school dance later in the film, as punks are wont to do.

As the strange characters and happenings pile up on each other, the film yearns to be Important and Profound, straining without achieving any substantial tone or theme. The forced whimsy kills any development or progression, comparable to the way in which the authority figures in the film seek to dampen Keanu's free spirit. Ironic, huh? Breaking the mold doesn't mean coasting on a why-be-normal aesthetic, in which a strange haircut means exposing the hypocrites and authoritarians for what they really are.

The Prince of Pennsylvania is not necessarily bad—I admire its gumption—but the film yields little results for all its gnashing and flailing. (*SC*)

THE PRINCIPAL

Dir. Christopher Cain / 1987

An urban school in disrepair meets a man in disrepair (Jim Belushi) with predictable, unfunny and overly violent results.

Besides the fact that Jim Belushi rides on the coattails of his brother's corpse, his acting career can only be described as "lamentable." This Chicago baboon has aped his way through one too many formulaic celluloid slop-heaps, be it *Red Heat* or *Taking Care of Business*. *The Principal* is another notch in the belt of mediocrity that encircles his prodigious gut.

A hard-luck washout (Belushi, of course) is inserted into a hard-luck school as the new principal. At first the match seems ill-fitting, but as the film goes through its creaky, dusty machinations, this unorthodox principal administers some tough love and earns a bit of respect from certain members of the student body (the ones he doesn't pound into nutburgers or kill). Lou Gossett Jr. sleepwalks through his role as the school's beleaguered security officer and the rest of the characters exhibit a single character trait that conveniently defines their correct stereotype. The movie has approximately two notes, oscillating between doofy mook humor—Belushi's specialty—and jarring ultraviolence. That said, the film is akin to watching a standup routine in one of those depressing clubs every metropolitan area has (y'know, a joint with a name like Chuckles, Zanies, Bust-A-Gut!, Yukz...that kind of crap), with periodic street brawls thrown in between the "jokes." Dismal, to say the least.

The punk sighting, like the movie, is uninspiring. We get a few seconds of ambient punks used strictly for background flavor: one with a nicely trimmed fauxhawk and the other with a standard haircut colored with orange dye to make her "punk." Both females wear The Uniform, sporting Ramones-style leather jackets, black jeans and boots.

These two extras are a testament to the laziness exhibited by the filmmakers. Not only does the director/costume designer/whoever fall back on the time-tested tradition of using punks as a sign of decay, they can't even muster up the energy to make them slightly shocking. C'mon, buddies, it's not that hard! Skewer a banana with a dog chain and put it around one of their necks! See? Easy! Or you could have at least put some chicken-bone earrings on one of the ladies. Give me something to look at if I'm going to put my senses through this torturous exercise. Jeez.

Note: The music in this film was supervised by a man named "Jellybean." (*SC*)

PRISON PLANET

Dir. Armand Gazarian / 1992

Dirty space people punch each other.

In the 23rd century, rebel Blaine is banished to the lawless Prison Planet. There, he's pitted against several shirtless villains, at one point in a gladiator circle surrounded by filth-caked spectators. Among these is a towering, bleach-mohawked man in full *Road Warrior* gear who throws down his losing fight ticket in disgust. His daring fashion sense evidently represents the trends on Prison Planet, as several other scenes feature murderous slobs with similar flair. One particular sleazerod—a chubby flesh-peddler—works for the epically caricaturesque villain Broxton, a gnashing monolith of flowing hair, baby oil and body odor. In fact, every character in the film is a perfectly distilled stereotype of the *Mad Max* knock-off genre. That being said, this film stands out for its fearless, unblinking stupidity; for example, the opening titles inform us that Prison Planet is "a world of *dispare*." A stillborn, brain-dead cinematic error suited only for illiterate, extremely muscular virgins. (*ZC*)

PRIVATE RESORT

Dir. George Bowers / 1985

Two friends (Johnny Depp and Rob Morrow) try to get laid
while staying at a hotel in Florida.

Gags galore in this quintessential post-*Porky's* '80s sex comedy. Depp tries hard to find ladies to get down with him. Since this film is a work of fiction, he finds it difficult. Andrew "Dice" Clay is hilarious as a two-timing wiseass who likes to slap men in the face. Most importantly, Greg Wynne is the Fort Knox of comic gold as Mike, the constantly-amazed punk surfer dude. An argument between the hotel detective and a barber breaks out in an elevator. They rip each other's uniforms to shreds. An old couple catches them. Suddenly, Mike shows up wearing a Hawaiian shirt. He has red-and-blue tipped spiky hair, gets really excited and says to the detective: "Whoaaaa dude. Excellent coat. You should try something in a red, though. This place is insaaaane! I'm having a great time." He then notices the elderly couple: "Whoaaa! A mom and a dad! I'm home. Heh heh." He leaves with them. Throughout the movie he shows up a few more times and steals every scene he's in. At the end, he gives elderly Dody Hoffman a punk makeover. It seems like they didn't have time to write lyrics to go with the rockin' soundtrack, so a guy just scats or sings "na na na" along with the music. In his first feature role, Morrow gets absolutely nude except for a turban. Goddammit, I love this film. (*BC*)

PRIVATE WARS

Dir. John Weidner / 1993

An East LA neighborhood hires an ex-cop
to clean up the streets.

When innocent citizens pool their meager budgets to rent a defender, every possible doofus and spazz shows up to apply for the job. The ninja, the beer-chugging slob and the dwarf in Rambo gear are all impressive, but the most mysterious hopeful is the catatonic violet-topped punk lady. Eventually, washed-up crimefighter Jack Manning (played by washed-up leading man Steve Railsback) is called out of his alcoholic haze to aid in the war against street thugs controlled by a crooked real estate developer (played by an exhausted Stuart Whitman, who exploitation historian Lars Nilsen describes as "looking like a cross between Gregory Peck and a pile of dirty laundry"). The reluctant hero battles against impossible odds, squaring off with half-a-dozen bikers plus a kung fu sadist.

Private Wars is a classless exercise in outdated machismo, with half its budget dedicated to massive explosions, which comes as no surprise since it's a Joseph Merhi production. At the time, Merhi was the perennial Hollywood low-budget action merchant, sometimes churning out eight movies in a single year, each with a bare-bones budget and—almost without exception—a formerly recognizable masculine lead. The titles tended towards a reliably calculated pattern of grittiness; between 1990 and 1991, Merhi released four consecutive films called *Living to Die, A Time to Die, The Art of Dying* and *The Killer's Edge*. His productions were steeped in glamourized violence and glorified prostitution, cluttering mom 'n' pop video stores with the specific type of testosterone-flavored trash that characterized the era. (*ZC*)

THE PROTECTOR

Dir. James Glickenhaus / 1985

Jackie Chan kicks people while Danny Aiello digests a hearty meal.

An early attempt by U.S. producers to sell Chan to an American audience that fails due to the lack of humor. Hollywood had yet to catch on that Chan is the self-proclaimed Asian Buster Keaton and much more at home doing action-comedy. What we have here is a passable überviolent exploitation pic. The movie kicks off with a promising moment of *Road Warrior*-style punks ripping off a big rig in the smoky, possibly future streets of some hollowed out city. Chan vs. punks in the post-apocalypse? This'll be great!!! But no...the punks are gone the moment the picture starts and we're actually just in crummy old modern-day New York. All possibilities of a truly good time are now out the window. (*BC*)

PROTOCOL

Dir. Herbert Ross / 1984

Sunny Davis (Goldie Hawn) becomes the toast of Washington D.C.
after being shot in the ass.

Buck Henry, a little asleep at the wheel, pens an obvious tale that's saved by its actors. Goldie Hawn charms your little socks off as Sunny, the ditzy cocktail waitress with a heart of gold. Ed Begley Jr., John Ratzenberger and Kenneth Mars all pull their comedic weight. Sunny throws a big old party at the Safari Club. Arabs, sexy ladies dressed as animals, Japanese businessmen and bikers join in the fun. The members of the motorcycle gang aren't sure whether they're Hells Angels or punks. One lady has a Misfits patch on her

Love Hurts…

jean jacket. Another girl has tousled lavender hair to match her gloves. They're accompanied by tough dudes and an overweight leather daddy blaring The Pointer Sisters on a boombox. When the police finally show up to calm things down, the cop figures, "It must be one of those gay Arab biker sushi bars." (*BC*)

PSYCHOS IN LOVE

Dir Gorman Bechard / 1987

A touching romance between two ruthless maniacs.

Misogynist serial killer Joe narrates his recent homicides, each depicted in graphic detail. Just as he's becoming bored with the old routine, he unexpectedly meets Kate, a young lady who gets her kicks disposing of licentious men. Love blooms immediately and the tender young couple delights in swapping murder stories. One of Joe's trophy kills is a war-painted, mohawked new waver who brags that she slept with all four members of her favorite band "plus the married one's wife." Kate manages to keep pace, knocking off amorous would-be suitors right and left. Added into the mix is Herman, a cannibalistic plumber.

Though resources were clearly limited, Bechard infuses his gore comedy with plenty of likeability and some well-presented viscera (courtesy of *Street Trash* makeup artist/real life new waver Jennifer Aspinall). The electropolka titular theme song is performed by the film's leads. Though it's a better product overall, *Psychos in Love* joins dust-collecting champs like *Even Hitler Had a Girlfriend* and *555* in the canon of no-budget straight-to-video movies somehow loaded with female nudity. How did this happen? Who were these women? Were they convinced by some miracle of dishonesty that their debut appearance in a Wizard Video production would eventually lead to Hollywood stardom? If the filmmakers actually paid them for the humiliation, wouldn't that same 50 bucks have been better spent on film stock and microphones? I mean, for chrissakes. (*ZC*)

PUCKER UP AND BARK LIKE A DOG

Dir. Paul S. Parco / 1990

Starving artist Max (Jon Gries) tries to make ends meet and keep his relationship afloat.

Max goes on a date to see a group of bongo players, and punks are in the audience with mohawks, pierced faces and colored hair. Max is deeply offended by some performance art about love and nuclear war. When things turn sour for him and his girl (and why wouldn't it after a date like that) he goes out with Plasmatics frontwoman Wendy O. Williams, who takes him on her hog to Mick's Charbroiled Burgers. After the meal, she whips him. Williams lets him use her bike under one condition: he must bring it back to her in one piece or else she'll remove his skin with a safety razor. Paul Bartel has a cameo as the director of a sleazy prison film called *Felony Girl*. *Pucker Up*…is one of the only times the superhumanly talented Jon Gries has been allowed to be the star of a film. He's not as wild here as in some of his supporting roles, but a little bit of gold is still gold. (*BC*)

PUMP UP THE VOLUME

Dir. Allan Moyle / 1990

A disenfranchised pirate DJ rallies the youth through his cliché-and-profanity-ridden screeds against the establishment.

This is a Youth Movie in the broadest sense of the term. The script sledgehammers every point home, letting all us ding-dongs know that adults are bad and kids are good. The movie should come with a list of the genre's explicit standards:

1) The suburbs are cloistered and oppressive, with decay and duplicity bubbling just beneath the surface.

2) Teachers are either liberal doorknobs or authoritarian monsters.

3) Students must band together to bring down "The Man," or else get "buttsurfed by the system." (Christian Slater actually recites this dialogue.)

The young, temporary heartthrob plays Mark, a recent, unwilling transplant to a sleepy Arizona burg after his father joins the local high school administration. Mark uses his shortwave radio to rail against the administration and expose the trolls that comprise the staff and faculty, attracting a loyal following of soulful, intelligent youth that are each defined by a single glaring and obvious characteristic (homosexual, nerd, troublemaker, etc.). So what we viewers get is Slater's alter ego "Happy Harry Hard-On" ranting about suburbia and high school and adults as a Lenny Bruce/Howard Stern hybrid. As Slater froths, the film cuts away to various teens looking longingly and introspectively into the distance, sitting in their rooms absorbing Harry's simple—and ultimately boring—diatribes that never fail to ruffle the feathers of every parent within a five-mile radius. This scenario is recycled for the bulk of the film, until the FCC gets involved, and threatens to tumble Slater's radio youth revolt. All the adults in the film's world are either malevolent child-haters or clueless human speed bumps with good intentions but no will. David Deaver is a floppy, callous guidance counselor who kicks pregnant teens out of school. Murdock is a roughneck supervisor who punches students out and wrangles up troublemakers. Ms. Creswood is the Simon Legree of principals, cracking the whip on all those who dare defy her rule. Characters are made, destroyed, and/or redeemed by their one or two lines of dialogue. The movie is a delivery system for platitudes, with all nuances asphyxiated by the boxed-in script. The message is broadly drawn and carefully explained in the dialogue; fast food Hollywood politics at their finest.

The ambiguity and quiet distinctions that do exist in the film are a direct result of the wasteland that was the '90s. Spotting and defining punks in popular films of the decade requires finesse and deliberation. For example, say you spot a character in *Pump Up The Volume* wearing a Ramones-style leather jacket. Naturally, the punk siren goes off. However, he also has a blond 90210 haircut, tapered jeans and boat shoes with no socks. What the—?!? The earmarks and characteristics of defining punks in the '80s become obsolete the following decade. Someone might be wearing punk accoutrements like combat boots—but wait!—he's also wearing pajama pants and a long sleeved thermal, with an unbuttoned Hawaiian shirt queasily riding atop his torso.

Still, the most interesting character in the film is true blue: he's got bleach-blond hair, a studded leather vest over a denim jacket, jeans and boots. Nice and simple, each article of clothing deliberately combining to create an ensemble that is unabashedly and obviously designed to represent PUNK. At one point, he calls a couple of alterna-geeks "yuppies." Awesome. He truly is a victim of the system, kicked out of school for poor grades, and even stages a performance art protest in front of the campus that involves blue (the school's color) smoke and spoken word. The movie should have been about this guy, for chrissakes. And to cap it all off, in one scene he's wearing a shirt printed with a succinct and evocative statement about the very film the audience is watching. It reads: "*What the fuck are you looking at?*"

Other items of interest are some kids slamdancing to Rollins and Bad Brains' cover of "Kick Out The Jams" and Harry's alternative rock love interest Nora, played by Samantha Mathis. Nora and her sidekick are definitely on the outermost reaches of punk fashion, attaining the status of ambiguous bag lady alt-goth librarian punks. Nora wears prep-school jackets with hippie skirts, those black-and-white striped leggings that painfully evoke *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, and Doc Martens. So I dunno. Her sidekick dresses similarly, but is one of the teens superpunk refers to as a yuppie. If the überpunk sends down the judgment that an individual displays characteristics akin to a young urban professional, this may void any punk status she might have fostered through her riot grrrl cat eyeglasses and devil-may-care attitude. I know, I know...it's a state of mind, it's not about the fashion...yeah, yeah. This state of mind opens the floodgates, especially in those swinging '90s, where every jerk with a flannel tied around his waist was a self-declared punk. So fuck that. Regardless, *Pump Up the Volume* may have good intentions as a testament to youth, but it's too obvious, too sanctimonious and condescends to the very demographic it targets. (*SC*)

PUNK AND ITS AFTERSHOCKS

Dir. Wolfgang Büld / 1980

A documentary about punk music, featuring The Clash, The Sex Pistols, The Jam, The Pretenders— wait...what?

This film claims that punk started in England. Of course this is a falsehood, yet people interviewed in this film—such as Bob Geldof—seem to think it's true. *Aftershocks* uses footage of The Clash and the Sex Pistols seen in other documentaries, but could be helpful for young folks who know nothing about the movement and need a basic education of late '70s British punk. Geldof comes off as a true jackass; he brags about how his band The Boomtown Rats irritate people with their music before we see footage of The Boomtown Rats playing mellow, safe music that even your Christian grandma would tolerate. Geldof then complains about being famous. Boo hoo. There's also a general opinion throughout the doc that punk died after the Sex Pistols broke up. Why does every '80s/'90s doc about punk give no regard to any of the D.C. or LA bands that formed after the movement diminished in England? There's some good footage of The Specials and The Jam, but why in God's name are The

Police here? Oh, all right...they started out punk. I understand. But why are The Pretenders featured? And why...*why* do we get footage of The Kinks playing a new number? They are neither punk nor its aftershocks. (BC)

THE PUNK AND THE PRINCESS

aka THE PUNK

Dir. Michael Sarne / 1993

High melodrama in the back alleys.

Based on a novel by then-13-year-old Gideon Sams, this film is like a tragic stage play performed on London's streets. It opens with a man in full Victorian dramatic garb presenting a soliloquy, then plunks us down in the middle of a filthy roadway as British grumps, drunks and punks scuttle to and fro. Among them is David, a starry-eyed, miserable young man whose greatest pleasure in life is pissing off his policeman dad. In one scene, David insists that his pop refer to him only by the name "Adolf." When these shenanigans get old, the boy dons his denim punk get-up and wanders the city, interacting with junkies and other self-destroyers. He eventually encounters Rachel, an unattainably respectable young lady who falls for him immediately. In a tale as old as time (or as old as *Romeo & Juliet* anyway), the pair faces countless obstacles in their forbidden love.

Director Sarne had been one of the most boisterous UK filmmakers, responsible for the notoriously raucous gender-bending comedy *Myra Breckenridge* in 1970. In order to bring *The Punk and the Princess* to the screen, he allegedly mortgaged his house and accrued a half-million dollar personal debt. He followed this romanticization of street life with concert film *Glastonbury: The Movie*, which featured Porno for Pyros and is as punk as an Armani suit. (*ZC*)

PUNK IN LONDON

Dir. Wolfgang Büld / 1977

Tireless German filmmaker Büld lays down
his punk culture documentary masterpiece.

This movie is genuinely punk from its opening moments, the credits spraypainted on a public wall by a perfectly-styled new wave girl. The streets of London are alive with counterculture at its apex, skunk-striped innovators roaming diners and record stores in silent packs.

The Adverts swill beer outside a club while pogo-hungry youths assemble in preparation for another night of sweaty distraction. The group performs their timeless "Gary Gilmore's Eyes" to an almost shirt-free crowd. Ian Dury and the Blockheads laze around their manager's office and discuss the bored desperation that drove them to form the group. They knock out the anthem "Right to Work" in their cramped practice space before the scene shifts to crucial venue The Roxy, a UK equivalent of CBGB and a springboard location for countless acts from Generation X to The Damned. X-Ray Spex perform in a soundproofed room, singer Poly Styrene belting out "Oh Bondage, Up Yours" accompanied by their trademarked sax honk.

Arturo Bassick of The Lurkers is interviewed beside his aged parents in their living room. The Boomtown Rats flash by on the TV and Bassick dismisses them as corporation-backed sellouts. Later, The Lurkers' "Shadows" is propelled by a hyperactive crowd shoehorned into a cramped club. U.S. export Wayne County and the Electric Chairs play to a similarly packed house, the patently cross-dressed frontman calling the audience "wankers" to build the teens into a frenzied storm. The Jam play an energetic set to a very young crowd, the band themselves almost the same age and The Stranglers initially shrug off their interview entirely. The film's final songs are performed by The Clash, captured after they'd reached success, but while they still displayed the vitality of their earliest years.

Legendary record outlet Rough Trade is profiled, clearly the retail hub for London's explosive music scene. Enough minimal-run zines and painfully rare 7"s are displayed to send a modern collector into a seizure. In a packed pub, mods and teddy boys provide their opinion on the movement, calling punks genderless aliens while accusing them of being pathetic and unoriginal. These decidedly rock-protective greasers clearly view the new music as an affront to their lifestyle, vowing to beat any offending parties if they so much as pass by on the street.

Büld lets his subjects tell their own story, and skillfully collects what they provide with the curiosity of a knowing outsider. *Punk in London* goes well beyond comparable films in solidly establishing the drive, force and experiences of a specific place and incredibly important time in punk history. (*ZC*)

WOLFGANG BÜLD

Director – PUNK IN LONDON;
BORED TEENAGERS; HANGIN' OUT; PUNK & ITS AFTERSHOCKS;
WOMEN IN ROCK; BERLIN NOW; FEEL THE MOTION

DAM: What was your earliest exposure to punk, and what really sparked your interest?

WB: I was interested in rock music since I heard The Beatles for the first time when I was 12, even if I never made music myself. Living in a small town, I studied the English music press weekly. In the early '70s I moved to Berlin and became involved with the glam rock scene—Bowie, Lou Reed, Roxy Music, New York Dolls. I liked the combination of music, style and attitude. When it stopped, my friends and I were looking eagerly for the next big thing. Living in Germany, you would never start something like this on your own. First there were exciting new acts from the U.S. like Patti Smith and the Ramones. And in '76, punk started as a whole movement in the UK and grew and grew. In '77 I went to London to take a look at it myself and was thrilled.

What led to you making *Punk in London*?

In '77, I was studying film in Munich and had to do a documentary for my examination. My natural choice was punk as the subject. The film school was a little bit apprehensive in the beginning but eventually agreed.

Did you find most of the bands you interviewed cooperative?

In general, the bands were eager to be in my film. As soon as word was out that we were filming, more and more bands got in touch with us. I don't know how they found the shitty bed and breakfast we were staying in. The only problem with the fans was their "punk attitude" aka spitting into the camera. It was hard to explain to my crew—who were more conservative film students—that this was no reason to start a fight.

When you watch the film, you'll notice that The Stranglers refused to talk to me because I'm German. This was a shocking experience because it was the very first scene of the shoot and the first interview I had done. Bernard Rhodes, the manager of The Clash, didn't give me the permission to film the band in the UK because, as a foreigner, I would be missing the necessary background. But Joe Strummer persuaded him to let me film the gig in Munich after I let him sleep on my sofa for one night.

Were you able to capture everything you wanted to?

No. We had only two weeks for filming and there was so much going on everyday. For example, one night I had to decide between gigs of Generation X, Siouxsie & the Banshees and The Adverts. I made the mistake to go for The Adverts but the manager of the venue refused to let me film the gig.

What was the premiere like, and how was it received?

The premiere was on December 2, 1977 in a small cinema in Heidelberg. It was sold out and the response was overwhelming. We only had two prints and I attended a lot of screenings in Germany and the UK. Theatrical distribution in Germany stopped all of a sudden after rioting fans caused some destruction in a cinema in Bochum. No one booked the film anymore. Even other films of the distributor like *Pink Floyd in Pompeii* and *Bird on a Wire* were cancelled. Years later, I found out that the riot was caused by some drama students who are now very well-known actors.

How did *Bored Teenagers* come about?

I was never into documentaries and always wanted to make feature films. My only chance to do one was to combine music with a plot. I combined my experience with bands on the road with a kind of love story.

Were The Adverts a personal favorite of yours at the time?

Yes, I liked their songs. And I had very bad luck with filming them in the UK. When we did their gig in the Marquee, the venue was totally overcrowded and my team got lost in the crowd trying to get some beer. So I had to operate the camera and record the sound all by myself. The visuals are OK but the sound is shit. When we did an interview with the band the tape got lost, etc....

For *Bored Teenagers*, I needed a band with an attractive female musician for the plot. So The Adverts were the best—and only—choice.

Was it difficult for you to direct an English-speaking band, especially of non-actors?

It was hell. I never met the band before shooting but the manager promised me everything would be fine, they would love the screenplay etc... He forgot to tell me that the band hated film and TV in general. So he had told them that they would do a tour in Germany with some filming. I had to throw away the script the first day and direct it like a documentary. Because they were playing themselves, they refused to do things they wouldn't do personally. I was lucky that I gave most of the acting to my friend Roadent from the beginning. We were thrown out of hotels three times in two weeks, Gaye was hardly sober for a minute, the gigs were arranged by us, the audience was paid with free beer and pissed when the band finally came on stage.

***Hangin' Out* was drastically different from what you'd done before. How did that project come to you?**

I was pigeonholed with music films. I wrote a few thrillers and horror movies, but wasn't able to raise the money. When the *Neue Deutsche Welle* (New German Wave) became successful in the early '80s, I saw a chance to do a low-budget blockbuster and make other films with the profit. But the producers had other ideas...

Any difficulties in making a family-friendly film? You said it was your most popular, yes?

Hangin' Out was completely different in the beginning. It was supposed to be a parody of German '60s and '70s *Schlagerfilme*, which feature middle-of-the-road stars using every opportunity to sing in a stupid plot. Ours was going to star Trio, the band that did "Da Da Da." A few weeks before shooting, Trio decided to record an album instead. We used an old script of mine (set in the '60s) and changed it to make a film with Nena and Markus. So the parody became a *Schlagerfilm* itself. 1.8 million people watched it in Germany: it was sold to more than 30 countries. But I had a very bad contract.

***Feel the Motion* was a very zany film, but had many major acts. Who put that all together?**

Another disaster. It was based on the weekly *Formel Eins* TV show. First we had a completely different script, much more provoking. But then a TV company became involved and changed most of it. The acts were chosen by them and EMI, who did the soundtrack. For example, I wanted Billy Idol and Mötorhead and they changed it to Limahl and Meat Loaf.

Were there any good experiences in creating such a frantic project?

Shooting was no fun and the film flopped. I was out of work as a director for six years.

As a filmmaker who has chronicled punk in several of its phases, how do you feel about the movement in its current state?

I haven't been involved with music that much in more than 20 years. The last documentary I did was *I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive*, about Hank Williams Sr. in 1991. Punk has existed for more than 30 years, even if none of the great bands from the beginning exist anymore. There are a few good "younger" bands but it's not the new, revolutionary thing anymore. It's hardly possible. Now it's just a genre like heavy metal or hip-hop. Even my bank clerk has bleached spiky hair, piercings and tattoos.

PUNK LAWYER

Dir. Gerrit von Elst / 1996

A well-paid white-collar loser becomes embroiled in punk social politics.

This morality tale from the Netherlands opens with a shot of a stocky, blue-haired bruiser standing at the foot of lawyer Ernst Quispel's bed. Terrified, the middle-aged man rolls over to see two heavily attired studs-n-leather youths staring at him through the darkness. Though it's only a dream, he spends the following day haunted by the vision and heads out for some alcoholic distraction after work. Leaving the bar, he stops the doorman from roughing up a venomous punk girl—the same one from his dream, natch—and ends up spending several hours with her. The following day, a street riot ends with Ernst being thrown into a police holding tank with his new friend and a tremendous assortment of punks of every size, shape and subcultural faction. He's quickly released, but one of the punks dies while incarcerated. Increasingly dissatisfied with the explanations (and his own comfortable life), Ernst runs across the same crew at an anti-police protest, and is slowly overwhelmed by a sense of duty that leads him to seek the truth. (*ZC*)

PUNK ROCK

Dir. Carter Stevens / 1977

Graphic sex in New York's prime underbelly.

A hard electro-disco theme belies the title as the film opens with softboiled detective Jimmy Dillinger (Wade Nichols) enjoying early-morning coitus with a recovered kidnapping victim. But it's not long before her rescue leads to a mountain of frame-ups and homicides, sending Dillinger down a trail of seedy late '70s NYC mayhem. The "punk rock" of the title is provided by actual primal band Elda & the Stilettos, who perform in leather bondage gear and are our hero's strongest link to the evasive criminal masterminds. The Stilettos' fashion aesthetic is a daring mix of cabaret, lounge jazz, D.C. punk and extraterrestrial chic. The East Village audience shows their appreciation by gyrating, tearing off clothing and degenerating into group sex.

Stevens also completed a separate R-rated cut, where graphic sex scenes were omitted and often replaced with additional footage of New York bands like Spicy Bits and The Fast, who put in a spastic performance reminiscent of Sparks colliding with The Dickies. At one point, their frontman pulls a box of Cheerios from nowhere and dumps it in his mouth while the geek-chic guitarist brings his stacked amps tumbling down in a display of punk wildness. The Stilettos have the most impressive pedigree of the film's roster, having been a creative launch pad throughout the '70s for artists like Fred Smith and Deborah Harry before they moved on to their more fame-destined projects.

Porn or not, *Punk Rock* was one of the earliest narrative films to focus on the exploding movement. Its star Nichols later quit taking nude roles to go legit, did a deodorant commercial, sang a disco song on Merv Griffin's show and died at age 38. (*ZC*)

CARTER STEVENS

Director – PUNK ROCK

CS: I was living at the time with Honey Stevens, a hardcore punk who dragged me to every punk event in New York. I was prepping my next porn and I thought I would set it in the world of punk rock, just as a framing device as it seemed to have that gritty edge. I wanted something like that for my next film, which was to be a noir type detective movie.

DAM: Were you and screenwriter Al Hozrod personally interested in the punk movement at the time?

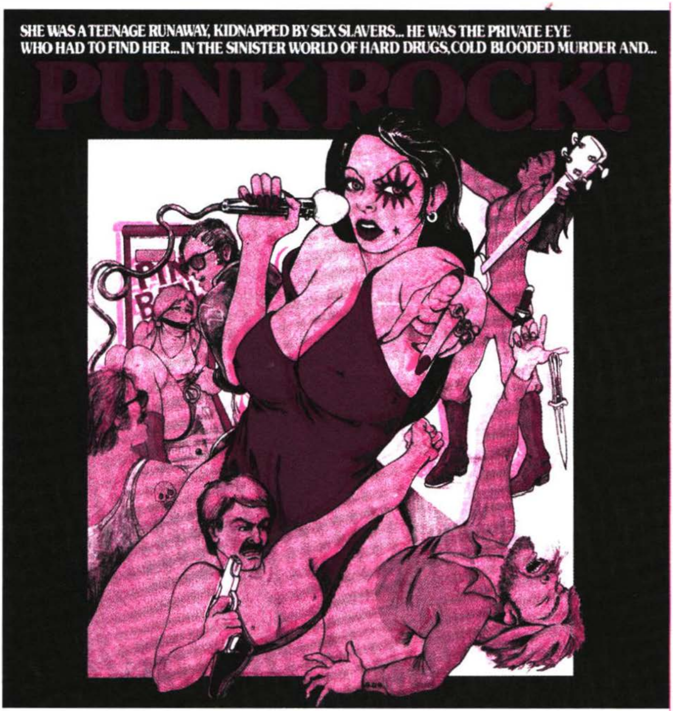
Actually I'm half of "Al Hazrad!" The other half of the writing was Rich Jaccoma, who was an editor at *Screw* magazine. Neither of us were really into punk. I'm a dyed-in-the-wool Jimmy Buffett parrothead type, who oddly enough I saw for the first time at Max's Kansas City. But as I say, my girl was into it and dragged me to every punk show she could find.

When did shooting begin?

The X version was shot in late 1977. The R-rated footage was shot about nine months later.

How did you end up scouting out Max's Kansas City, and was it difficult to get their permission to film in the venue?

I practically lived downstairs at Max's in those days. It was my neighborhood bar. Plus Honey—my lady—loved the music upstairs. So I knew the owners pretty well and had no problem getting them on


SHE WAS A TEENAGE RUNAWAY, KIDNAPPED BY SEX SLAVERS... HE WAS THE PRIVATE EYE
WHO HAD TO FIND HER... IN THE SINISTER WORLD OF HARD DRUGS, COLD BLOODED MURDER AND...
PUNK ROCK!

board for an R-rated feature.

None of the footage—especially the sex—in the original X-rated version was shot at Max's. The scenes with Elda and The Stilettos, including the orgy scene, were shot at an illegal gambling club, which we took over during the day and named "Wichita Express." All the extras in the X version were hired and most were porn actors or actors who didn't mind doing nudity in the scene, aside from a couple friends who I used to pad out the room. None of them were punks. All the other music scenes were shot much later for the R version and were shot upstairs at Max's.

How were bands selected for the film?

As I say, I hung around Max's a lot and basically auditioned the bands who were interested. The Squirrels had an inside track since I knew the lead singer Pepe and he was a hardcore XXX actor that had been in the orgy scene of the original X version, as well as being in my film *Honeymoon Haven.*

During the musical performances, are the punks in the crowd actors, fans or a mixture of both?

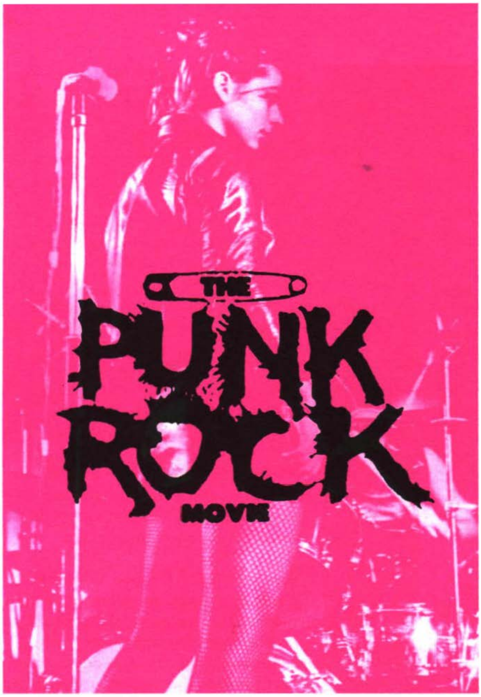
All the extras in the music sequences at Max's were genuine punk fans. For weeks before the filming we gave out invitations to people at Max's who we thought looked good as real punks. They were instructed to dress the same, to not change their appearance before filming.

Any headaches in getting the film made?

All the typical hardships that are normal when making a film with grand ambitions on a shoestring budget.

How was the film received by punk fans? Was there a proper premiere that was attended by people from that scene?

The X version was *very* well received. It did great business nationwide and that was the reason the distributor approached me about turning it from an X-rated porn to an R-rated music exploitation film. Unfortunately, that's where his good ideas ended. The marketing campaign they dreamed up for the film was—to put it mildly—a disaster. They changed the title from *Punk Rock* to *Rock Fever* and made up a press book and posters with a Travolta-like guy in a white suit with his arm raised. The idiots didn't know the difference between punk rock and disco! The R-rated version tanked, but luckily for me, the X version kept raking it in.



THE PUNK ROCK MOVIE

Dir. Don Letts / 1978

A film documenting the goings-on and goofings-off during England's 1977 punk explosion.

Though he was on UK punk's frontlines as club DJ at The Roxy, I'm honestly not too sure about this Don Letts character. My skepticism grows from his continuing use of punk as a topic in pretty much every film he's made, most of which follow the year 2000. While he can't be making gobs of cash, he certainly seems to be resting on his laurels. Also, he was part of the post-Clash abomination Big Audio Dynamite. His films always come off as perfunctory—a sketch rather than a fully-realized picture—and *The Punk Rock Movie*, his first film on the subject, is no exception. Within the context of his filmography, he should have gotten more introspective, and possibly more passionate about the well-worn topic of punk.

The Punk Rock Movie best conveys how boring the genre became. Most of the supergroups of the time, especially the Sex Pistols, seem to have been captured just as they were starting to go through the motions. This film is packed with historically relevant footage of many substantial bands including The Slits, the Pistols, X-Ray Spex, The Clash and many more, but the film has no thrust, nothing to pull the viewer in and make us believe that what was happening was exciting. Maybe Letts' objective was simply to document the scene he was involved with, which, unfortunately, gives the movie an aesthetic electricity akin to 16mm films of your uncle's canoeing trip in the Yukon. The peripheral bands exude the most originality and excitement: the footage of Slaughter and the Dogs (actually considered a "pub rock band") and Subway Sect shows some of the creativity and energy in this burgeoning scene. Slaughter and the Dogs plays a catchy song about narcotics use and the lead singer really shows his enthusiasm for the subject. Subway Sect is the polar opposite, exuding a bored fuck-off attitude along with an arty, angular riff-driven mess. The Slits also bring the goods, with one of the greatest cavewoman smash-and-bash drummers of all time. They really did learn to play by picking up their instruments and proclaiming "fuck all."

We also see poseur supreme Billy Idol hamming it up with Generation X and some embarrassing footage of Alternative TV trying to write a song with what can only be described as a "reggae coach." The rest of the film is padded out with tossed-off footage of tour bus rides, The Clash goofing around and some close-ups of punker cleavage and crotches. So, as a historical document, *The Punk Rock Movie* is unparalleled, clearly shot by an individual who was deeply involved in the scene. However, as a film, it lacks any sort of actual *drive*, which is the thing that made punk rock worth documenting in the first place. (*SC*)

PUNK ROCK SUMMER CAMP

Dir. Rick Charnoski / 1999

A document of the Vans-sponsored Warped Tour, featuring Rancid, NOFX, Cherry Poppin' Daddies and others.

Fuck. Goddamn shit-eating garbage. Poo poo pee pee sycophantic Down syndrome moneyfucking ape-brained horse-asses. Culture-leeching, teat-sucking, chest-shaving masturbation fantasists. Trombone tootling, temporary tattoo, Caucasian dreadlock, anarchy-symbol-on-their-PT-Cruiser, fashionably vegan, pot-dealing nine-year college students. Bullshit. Dogshit. Walking, talking, breathing gorilla shit. Mohawk-n-orthodonture, shirtless, closet Eminem-listening sons of governors. Racist, rapist, worthless, thoughtless, faceless nutrags. Hundred-dollar dye-job, mall-crawling, chart-climbing, ass-chasing, check-cashing whack-offs.

"A portion of the money from this video's sales will go towards cancer research." (*ZC*)

PUNK VACATION

Dir. Stanley Lewis / 1987

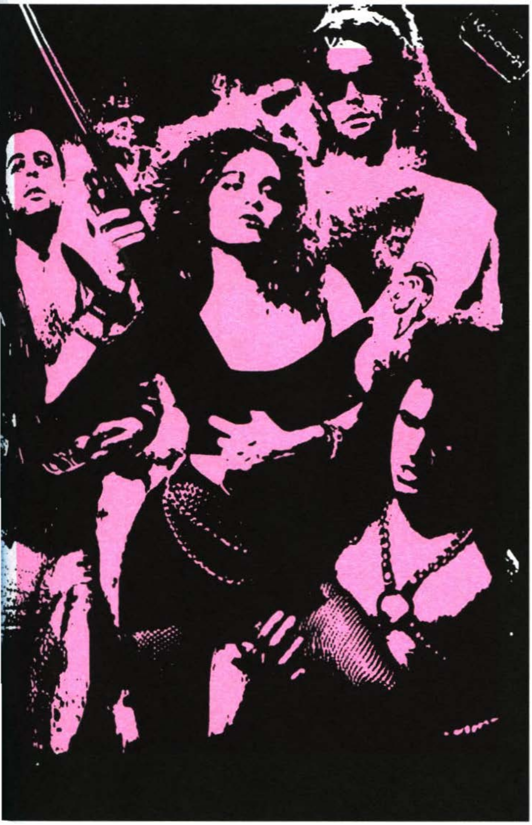
Punks vs. everyone.

The VHS cover of this urbanity-free action blast has it all: double-barrel shotguns, mirrored shades, X-Acto blades and bondage gear. The tape inside features neither these items nor the people photographed brandishing them. But for aficionados of straight-to-video trash, *Punk Vacation* will not disappoint.

A ragged crew of misplaced punk bikers accidentally kills the owner of a roadside diner, drawing the attention of the local law. One of the untamed youths is injured on the scene and taken to the hospital while his pals hide out in the desert. The fat sheriff is goin' nuts trying to find "those fascist commie pinko bastards," sending all available squad cars out to scour the countryside. At a remote, abandoned barn, the punks plan an escape for their hospitalized comrade. Their leader (or as she puts it, "shepherd") is Ramrod, a shock-haired, mascaraed mini-megalomaniac with an immense amount of loyalty to her fellow wasteoids. When the murdered man's clean-cut daughter Lisa invades the punks' makeshift stronghold, Ramrod kidnaps her and assumes Lisa's identity to sneak into town. She boldly passes by a cop who's too busy perusing a plus-size girdle catalog to notice.

Ramrod returns before nightfall, when the gang engages in the age-old custom of dancing to disco-industrial music while menacing a naked woman. As the police move in to rescue Lisa, Ramrod tells a cop that he'll be raped before he's killed. One bullet later, a punk hits the dirt and Ramrod's gang is rabid for retribution. Weapons are loaded, gauntlets are buckled and the punks head out for the final showdown...following a savage bonfire war chant, of course.

Director Lewis and screenwriters Lance Smith and Harvey Richelson never worked on another project again, which is a shame considering how many shit-churners spend decades at the production helm. Honestly, besides some crippled editing and pacing, *Punk Vacation* isn't nearly as terrible as video-scavenging scoffers might assume. For one thing, the filmmakers make the bold decision that sets the movie apart from most anything else in the '80s low-budget action canon, simply by taking an impartial stance on the conflict. Despite the punks' ominous, unintentionally homicidal introduction, they're treated as humans for much of the picture, suffering from fear, self-doubt, vapid small talk and other human weaknesses. They sincerely regret the events that led them into hiding, and their violent leanings only manifest when defending one of their own.



Sympathetic: yes. Accurate: nope. Only half of these would-be subhumans vaguely qualify as punks in the visual sense, and those that do wave their proverbial flag as wildly as possible. Their black leather new wave roadster chic sometimes borders on post-apocalyptic, and their various fashion subtleties act as a shallow but extensive sampling of punk stereotypes. The sore thumb standout is a hippie-influenced whiner with a feather earring, who gripes about every plot development and prefers pacifism to payback. Saddled with the most unlikeable traits, the character is furthered disgraced by his very name: "Feggy." (*ZC*)

PUNKING OUT

Dirs. Maggi Carson, Juliusz Kossakowski & Fredric A. Shore / 1979

The ultimate document of '70s punk-era CBGB.

Footage from this seminal short film has been recycled endlessly in other punk docs. The film chronicles a handful of bands and their fans at CBGB in 1977, namely the Ramones, Richard Hell & the Voidoids and the Dead Boys. Initially meant to play on PBS with the premiere of Alan and Susan Raymond's acclaimed JD doc *Bad Boys* in 1978, it was dropped when the filmmakers refused to censor the strong language. It did eventually play on PBS, as well as in countless film festivals and college campuses before a limited release on home video following a restoration by The Donnell Film Archive of the New York Public Library in 2004.

The film opens with Richard Hell doing "Blank Generation," while the interviewer probes audience members about their feelings on the label invoked by Hell's anti-anthem. Many, appropriately enough, have no comment. The camera pans back to Hell, spastic and twitchy onstage as he declares that "Love Comes in Spurts." Cheetah Chrome makes the usual observations about how prog rock killed music and how the ineptitude of punk reclaims it. After the Dead Boys perform a cover of "Anarchy in the UK," random audience members are interviewed drunk, stoned or just plain weird. Other faces include CBGB owner Hilly Kristal, curious out-of-towners and a young, macho Lydia

Lunch who boasts about balling all the Dead Boys and giving them bloody tampons to eat onstage. If they ate tampons, it wasn't captured in the film, but they do perform "I Need Lunch." Most prized of all is the interview footage with the late punk fixture/songwriter (and future bodybuilder) Helen Wheels, who belies the punk stereotype with her statement that she's "never bored." The Ramones hit the stage with ferocity for "I Don't Wanna Walk Around with You." Dee Dee Ramone gets grilled backstage about the band's excessive volume and glue-sniffing, the latter of which he adorably claims is "an adolescent trauma that all kids went through. You know, all the kids had to sniff it," while Joey snickers on the sidelines. They kick into "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue" and "Blitzkrieg Bop" as the eclectic crowd—bohemians, rockers, secretaries and general misfits—fuel them with convulsive energy. The complete song performances, as well as great audience shots filled with a lot of humor and truth, make this short film an essential document of NYC punk history, but of the three filmmakers only Juliusz Kossakowski went on to any sort of career in the movie industry. (*KJ*)

PURPLE PEOPLE EATER

Dir. Linda Shayne / 1988

The Purple People Eater lands on earth
and jams music for all to enjoy.

The strangest *E.T.* rip-off of them all. Is this the only film based on a novelty song? I think so, and considering its failure to break box office records, it's probably the last. The Purple People Eater looks like one of Chuck E. Cheese's bandmates. You can thank the Chiodo Brothers (*Killer Klowns from Outer Space*) for this amazing creation. He can blow smooth sax music through his horn and forms a rock band with Billy (A pre-*Doogie* Neil Patrick Harris). They add an accordion player who can jam Bon Jovi and the Beastie Boys. Harris' grandpa, played by the much-better-than-this Ned Beatty, tells Billy that life is too short. This advice is used to somehow coerce Billy into painting grandpa's entire apartment. Beatty gets blue paint right down the middle of his head. "It's very punk," Harris says as he spikes Beatty's thinning hair. "Is that good or bad?" Beatty asks. They then dance to "Good Golly Miss Molly." Neighbor Shelley Winters checks in to see where the loud rockin' tunes are coming from. "I've gone punk!" Beatty declares to calm her. Later, Beatty sees actual punks at the mall. "These are the punks you told me about!" he shouts, much to Harris' embarrassment. Little Richard plays the mayor of the town. This fantastic film also features the much-loved Oscar Meyer wienermobile. (*BC*)

QUARANTINE

Dir. Charles Wilkinson / 1989

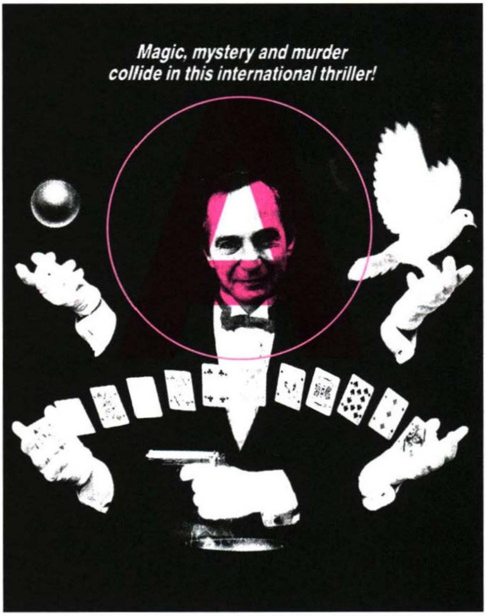
An unusually depressing post-apocalyptic drama.

In the disease-ridden Earth of the future, refugee camps of punks and other outcast citizens refuse to be relocated to the government's quarantine centers. The potentially ill are placed on a conveyor belt and prodded into trucks to disappear forever. The man responsible is Senator Ford, a scrawny version of Big Brother who's been targeted by young female freedom fighter Ivan. Unable to expose the government alone, she enlists the aid of scientist Spencer and an orphan he found in a garbage chute. A blandly paranoid, sweaty bore. (*ZC*)

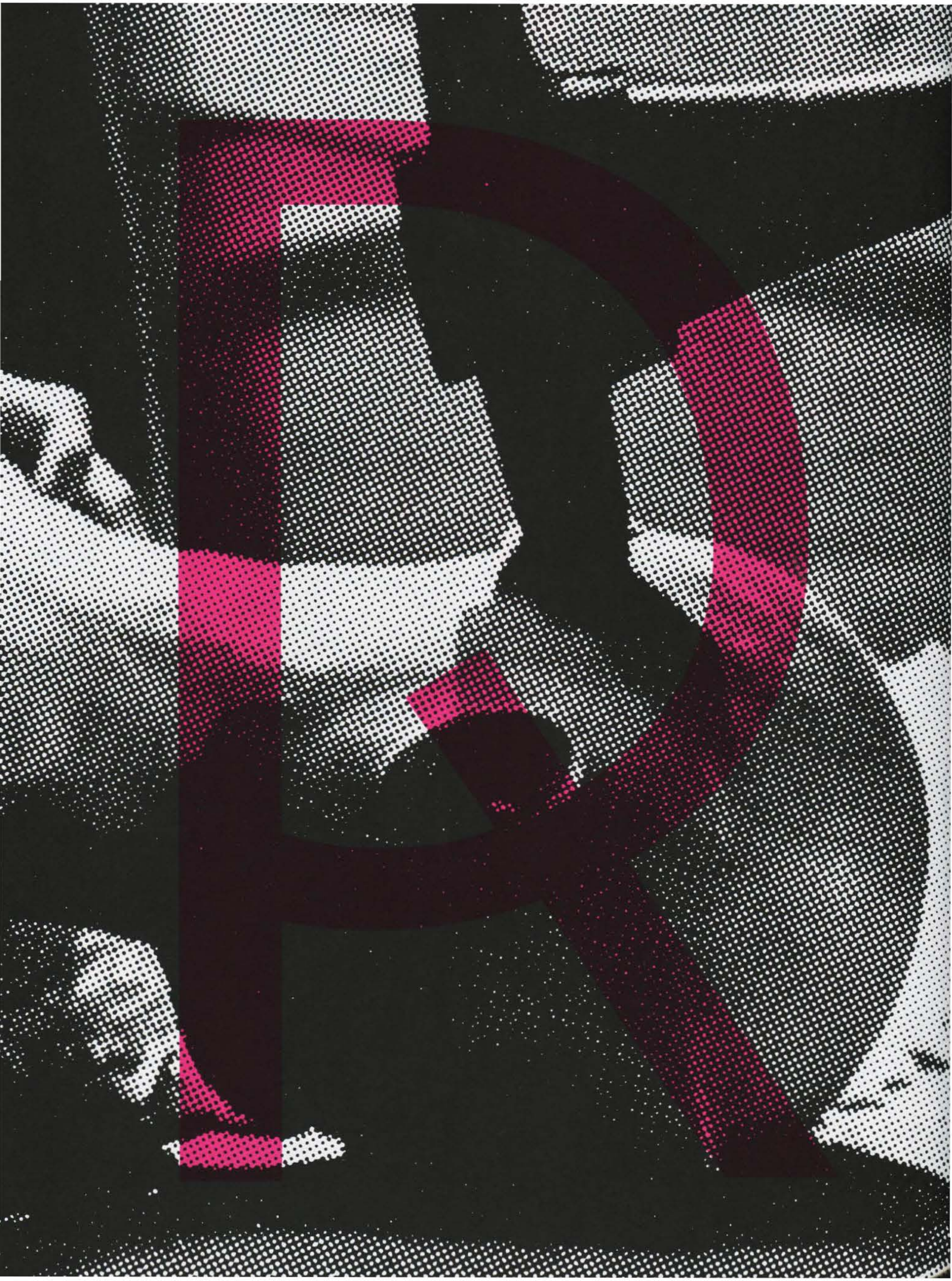
QUICKER THAN THE EYE

Dir. Nicolas Gessner / 1989

A low-rent magician (Ben Gazzara) gets caught up
in some boring-ass intrigue.


Magic, mystery and murder
collide in this international thriller!

This is quite possibly the slowest movie of all time. Nothing happens here. Nothing. There is a plot. There are characters. But I couldn't tell you what really happened. I zoned out after the opening credits. And here is the only good scene in the film: On stage, illusionist Gazzara walks behind a fake door dressed as a priest, then jumps out clothed as one tough cookie, wearing a wig with dyed black sides and a red stripe on top. He is extremely excited to be a punk. He dances a little tough-guy step with firm fists, displaying a genuinely youthful sprite. He walks away to reveal an anarchy symbol on back of his leather jacket. Well, it isn't a true anarchy symbol, despite the costume designer's intentions...it's just a Helvetica "A" in a circle. (*BC*)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RADIO ON

Dir. Christopher Petit / 1979

A man drives to Bristol, prompted by
his brother's mysterious death.

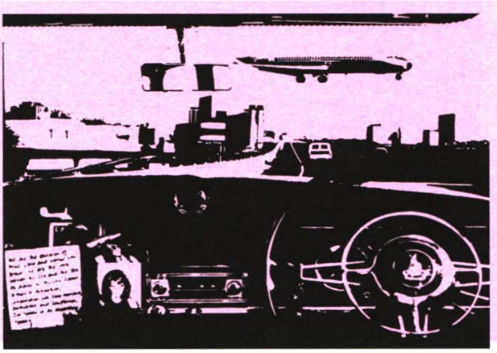
Christopher Petit had been the movie editor at *Time Out* Magazine for five years when he ventured into first-time filmmaking with the sparse-yet-mesmerizing *Radio On*. Produced by Wim Wenders (after Petit had secured a Channel 4 deal for *Paris, Texas*), with stunning black-and-white camerawork by Wenders' cinematographer Martin Schaefer, *Radio On* prophetically captures the existential malaise of late '70s British society at the onset of Thatcherism.

The film's nonexistent narrative involves a man (David Beames) who has just been informed of his brother's death in Bristol. The news comes in the form of a letter within a mysterious package that also contains two Kraftwerk cassettes. From there, a road trip begins (after popping over to the barber shop for a Bruce Foxton haircut). The man drives, mostly solo, through landscapes both urban and rural: from the cold concrete buildings and factories of over-industrialized cities to endless motorways dotted with bleak rural pubs and decrepit petrol stations. There's an overwhelming sense of emptiness, emotionally as well as spatially. The faces, the flickering televisions, they all register nothing; or if anything, maybe dread.

Underlying this grim tale is the film's soundtrack, the one thing that has saved it from complete obscurity. They had an arrangement with Stiff Records, whose artists are all over the soundtrack (Wreckless Eric, Ian Dury, The Rumour, Lene Lovich, Devo) and whose logos and album covers are featured prominently. Stiff wasn't a punk label per se, but they have always been looked upon as such because of their DIY guerilla marketing tactics (and even though their roster was wildly eclectic with a leaning towards pub rock, they did put out the UK's first punk single, The Damned's "New Rose"). That said, rock film fans seeking out *Radio On* may be its only substantial audience, but some viewers may get restless. There's not enough here for most people to grab onto, and the film's numerous scenes of protracted silence make its categorization as a "rock movie" questionable.

Other than that, the "punkest" the film gets is the shifty-but-adorable pre-teen hustler in a button-laden leather jacket who offers our protagonist drugs, including, but not limited to, "speed, coke, methadrine, acid, cheeseburgers..." Also of note is an early appearance by Sting as an Eddie Cochran-obsessed guitar player, if you consider him punk (I don't).

Reactions to Petit's film have been extremely polarized, ranging from complaints of unrelenting tedium to proclamations of genius (I don't know about genius, but it's pretty damn good in my opinion). Petit is one of those directors who has repeatedly fallen through the cracks in British cinema history, considered too narrative-minded to be accepted by the avant-garde, yet too lacking in narrative to be accepted by anyone else. Perhaps the film would be best described as a breathtakingly shot travelogue rather than as a road movie. It's been called an "anti-road movie," but that's done little to deter people from certain expectations regarding the film's structure. Also worth seeking out is *The Falconer*, Petit's revisionist experimental bio-pic about '60s pop promo film pioneer Peter Whitehead, which has been disowned by its subject. (*KJ*)



CHRISTOPHER PETIT

Director – *RADIO ON*

DAM: How did your years as a film critic influence your filmmaking choices and decisions?

CP: I was, for example, more influenced by the German New Wave, which coincided with my years of reviewing, than the French New Wave. More generally, I think most people's movie tastes are defined at a certain age i.e. 16-24; actually, probably younger these days...6-12.

What is the German connection? Not only did you have Wim Wenders and Martin Schafer on board: but there's also the soundtrack, the German women, and the quote near the beginning. Can you talk about the German connection?

The German connection was strategic. There was very limited UK funding for a first-time director. The BFI Production Board—now defunct—was the only place to go. I knew the BFI was looking for a higher distribution and film festival profile, and also was trying to attract co-production funding. It seemed that if I could use my critical connections to encourage this and offer the film as some sort of musical package, it would by default have a kind of profile irrespective of my qualifications. Wenders's commitment and his offer to find 30% finance in Germany made it hard for the BFI to turn down. The German involvement had to be reflected in the film, hence some German crew and casting.

All the English musicians appear to be off the Stiff Records roster. Was this an aesthetic decision, or was there some kind of deal with Stiff that just made it easier to get their song rights locked?

Again strategic. Music in film is usually very expensive to buy because of copyright protection. I knew I needed music—it was the starting point of the film—and to circumvent the usual

problems we decided to go direct to the artists or record companies. Stiff, which had a varied and interesting roster, was agreeable even though we were offering a laughable amount of money. I became the world's worst music journalist for a while in order to meet Kraftwerk and we got to Bowie direct who was agreeable to our offer.

Can you tell me about the casting? Who is the weird kid that offers Beames his choice of drugs and/or cheeseburgers?

That was all done with the aid of a casting woman. She kept recommending Beames, whom initially I thought was wrong, but was absolutely correct. Lisa Kreuzer came as a given, as part of the German contingent and the part was written for her. The squaddie was a fine Scottish actor recommended by a friend. I can't remember where Paul Hollywood came from (the kid outside the hot-dog stand), except that he was local to Bristol. Sandy Ratcliffe had been very good in a Ken Loach film. The woman who chucks Beames at the beginning had been in a TV show *Rock Follies* and I had known her slightly before that when a student. Sting was recommended by his acting agent who was very ambitious and pushy. He was unknown but it was pretty obvious he was going to be a big star and I cast him as an obvious asset. In the long run this hasn't helped the film's credentials as a "post-punk classic" given his subsequent global dominance and questionable credentials. Most of the background kids came from Anna Sher's acting school and went on to parts in TV soap *Eastenders*.

Why are all the women in the film so mocking or downright hateful towards Beames?

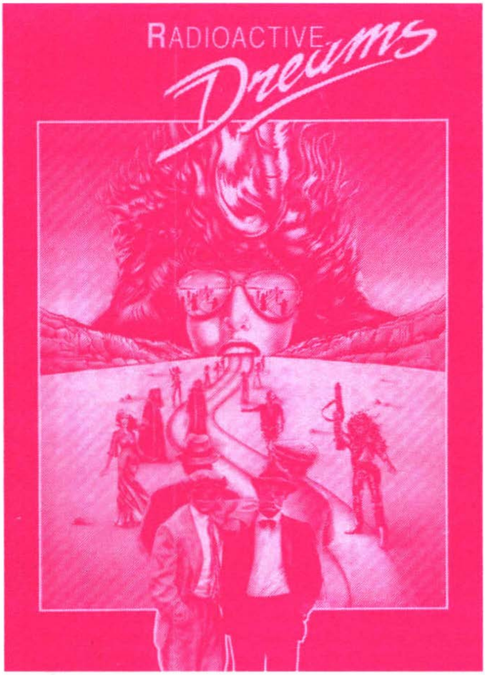
Women in road movies are usually treated as way-stations, which play out as one-night stands. This nearly always struck me as corny, improbable and unreal. I thought *Radio On* should be pretty much a fuckless zone, in keeping with the general climate of the time.

RADIOACTIVE DREAMS

Dir. Albert Pyun / 1985

"Raymond Chandler meets Mad Max."

Two young men obsessed with 1940s detective novels (John Stockwell and Michael Dudikoff) emerge from a bomb shelter in a post-nuclear desert, unwittingly carrying the keys to control the world. They're immediately accosted by vegetable men and female bondage mutants in day-glo red wigs before stumbling across a female renegade that one character inaccurately deems a "new wave punk." This description is much better suited to an angry sea of apocalyptic lowlifes that our heroes encounter after being assaulted by an enormous sewer-dwelling rat-serpent. The punks are festering primates, screaming atop buses, blaring discordant synth anthems and



fighting in the street. Anti-gravitational hairdos and pierced faces are required. The boys end up in a brawl with the entire hideous herd, studded-fists raining down with inhuman force. Later, our protagonists perform an extended old-timey soft-shoe routine as the same crowd of subculturoids looks on in abject confusion.

Unusually emotional (and structured) compared to Pyun's later sci-fi films, and featuring a shockingly wacky lead performance from "American Ninja" Dudikoff. Lumbering character actor George Kennedy appears in a lizard mask, and several songs are performed by new wave near-misses Sue Saad & the Next. (*ZC*)

RAIDERS OF ATLANTIS

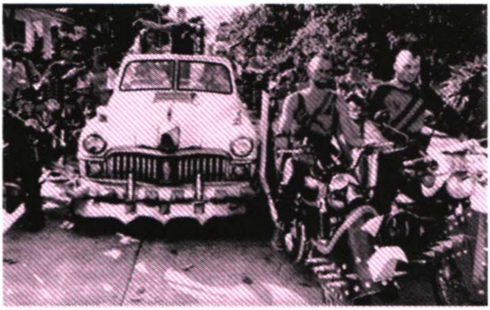
aka THE ATLANTIS INTERCEPTORS

Dir. Ruggero Deodoto / 1983

The mythical civilization of Atlantis rises from the ocean, unleashing a gang of brutal killers.

Throughout the '80s, one could always count on the Italians to create some of the most outrageously unpredictable, unashamedly derivative exploitation pictures. This jaw-dropping cinematic mishmash is a thoroughly entertaining and preposterous example. While *Raiders* is admittedly trashy, it's a real treat for genre fans as it mixes so many riffs, references, scenes and motifs from other films that its fun just to pick out the "influences." But here's the kicker: *Raiders* features one of the stupidest and meanest punk/disco/post-apocalyptic gangs in spaghetti cinema history!

Mike (Christopher Connelly) and Washington (Tony King) are a pair of Vietnam vets turned Miami mercenaries who are cruising toward the Caribbean after a big score. Some scientists are simultaneously raising a Russian submarine, when a domed island suddenly rises from the ocean, flooding the scientists' rig. On an anonymous Caribbean island, a man and woman are suddenly attacked by a weird gang of silly, decked-out punks. There's leather, spikes, studs, mohawks and scowls, plus manic disco facepaint, *Darktown Strutters*-style choppers, a dude with a goofy clear plastic skull mask and a '57 Chevy with crazy-assed giant bladed fins. Anyway, the gang is as mean as they are funny-looking and quickly shoot arrows in the bewildered couple. Meanwhile, Mike and Washington have met up with the survivors of the research team, including Dr. Cathy Rollins (Gioia Scola) and Professor Saunders (George Hilton). The group makes it to the now-decimated island and thus begins a showdown between Atlantis and the remaining Earthlings.



There's really no place for plot or logic in director Ruggero (*Cannibal Holocaust*) Deodato's world. And don't get fond of too many of the characters, as most of the cast serves as nothing more than targets for the Plastic Skull Mask Posse to aim their flamethrowers at. All of the action, violence and gore is served up in the amateurish-yet-enthusiastic style so prevalent in Italian films of the '80s, and the most gruesome highlight is the beheading of a mohawked punk on a motorcycle. Aside from the relentless mayhem and shameless aping of other films, one of *Raiders*' glories is the ridiculous post-synch dialogue, perhaps best exemplified by this flirtatious exchange between Mike and Dr. Rollins:

MIKE: What is that thing?
ROLLINS: I don't think you'd understand.
MIKE: Oh, all sailors are guys like Popeye, huh? All we do is eat spinach?
ROLLINS: I like spinach too.
MIKE: Well, I'll tell you what...as soon as we get back, I'll take you out to a spinach dinner. Ha ha!

Ah, young love. Like I said, *Raiders* is the kind of movie that doesn't make much sense, is never concerned with troublesome details like coherency, and you're not likely to find much character development. But who has time for junk like that when things can be violent or explosive or punk...or all three combined! Hooray for Italy! (*SH*)

RAMONES: AROUND THE WORLD

Dir. Marky Ramone / 1998

A tour documentary compiled from "The Marky Ramone Library."

Edited together from grainy, handheld footage taken on Marky Ramone's camcorder between 1991 and 1996 (when the band's lineup consisted of Joey, Johnny, Marky and CJ), *Around the World* showcases the Ramones at the end of their career and the height of their non-domestic popularity. The video alternates between live performances and backstage montages. An enormous portion of the running time is consumed by footage of worshipping fans screaming their undying devotion to the band through car windows and closing doors.

One sequence in Brazil plays out with the claustrophobic intensity of a horror film as the Ramones and their entourage attempt to drive through a horde of riotous fans. As the crowds block the roads and begin pounding on the windows of the car, the agitated band members berate their longtime manager Monte Melnick for the poorly-organized escape. Later Joey boasts that at one of their South American arena shows there were 5,000 people in attendance beyond the legal limit. The video's over-emphasis on the endless multitude of fans conveys a feeling that the Ramones were somewhat in awe of the draw and widespread commercial appeal they'd developed. Marky talks about one Italian fan who kissed his hand and called him "Your Majesty."

You start to get a sense of how gratifying it must have been to achieve that kind of success after so many years of creating profoundly influential music. And yet the band here is anemic. There's no energy and no excitement. The live performances seem routine and the endless touring tiresome. There isn't much pleasure in watching a punk band play Lollapalooza. The video presents an endless parade of photo shoots, interviews and gold record ceremonies (except, since it's the '90s they don't get gold *records*, they get ridiculous little gold *CDs*). They tour Europe, Japan and South America. At one point they argue over whether they are in Chile or Brazil. Lemmy Kilmister and Debbie Harry both appear briefly and do nothing. In one particularly cringe-worthy sequence, Tim Armstrong and Lars Frederiksen from Rancid join the Ramones (including Dee Dee) on stage during the band's final farewell show to sing "53rd and 3rd."

The movie offers no context for its performances or backstage clips and it doesn't hold its focus long enough to let any of the band's personality emerge. The only exception is one brief sequence where the camcorder catches a televised interview with CJ Ramone. He says:

"I think punk rock kinda got misconstrued by everybody for a little while when a lot of the English bands came out because they made it seem like punk was a political thing and it was mohawks and rings through the face and all kinds of stuff. And that's really not what it was. Punk is just an attitude, you know? Elvis Presley was a punk. Jim Morrison was a punk. You've got all these people out there: *punks*. And it's got nothing to do with their hairstyle or anything like that. It's got to do with rebelliousness."

But the main appeal of this video is in watching the lunatic behavior of fans chasing down speeding cars, getting full back tattoos and jumping off balconies. As the Ramones drive to the airport, a little Japanese girl holds up a hand-written sign that reads, "Your recent visit afforded us many happy moments." And then they are gone. (*TS*)

RATBOY

Dir. Sondra Locke / 1986

A completely unnecessary fable
about the importance of being yourself.

Clint Eastwood's former muse Locke directs and stars in this stumbling dramatic fairytale about a hideous rodent man who becomes the toast of high society. Ratboy (S.L. Baird) leads a simple life in the hillside dump until he's kidnapped by two yokels who sell him to reporter Nikki Morrison (Locke). Realizing this bucktoothed dwarf's obvious financial potential (??!!), she and her friends (Gerrit Graham, Robert Townsend and Louie Anderson) set out to make him a star. Her first attempt is at MTV, where a roomful of glam losers give Ratboy the thumbs down. Later, the wee mutant gets drunk at an upscale party and escapes into the Hollywood darkness. Wandering the streets, he's shocked to encounter an extremely high-maintenance fuchsia-haired punk and her slightly less invidualistic friends. Cowering in punkaphobic terror behind a dumpster, he comes face to face with a Hispanic gangster who looks at him and screams, "No me gusta!"

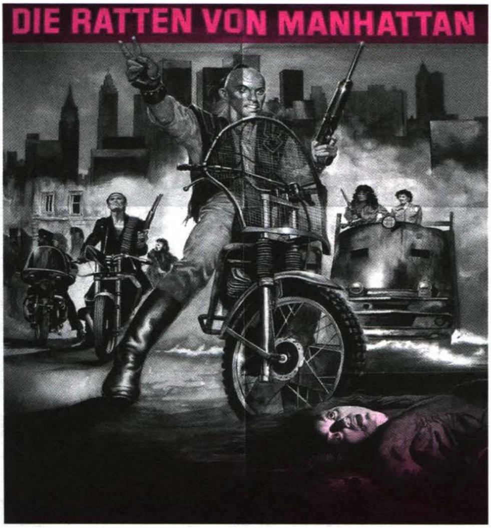
The title lead is played by diminutive actress Sharon Baird, who was already accustomed to playing animalistic roles after working for Sid & Marty Krofft. In her five years with the psychedelic children's TV pioneers, she'd been cast as foam-suited characters with names like "Funky Rat" and "Stupid Bat," and enjoyed a long stint on *Lidsville* as "Raunchy Rabbit." For *Ratboy*, her fantastic makeup effects were designed by top creature-maker Rick Baker, leaving all other aspects of the film in the dust. By this point, Sondra Locke had appeared in over a dozen features, but she directs as if she's never seen a movie in her life. Stranger is the fact that she'd choose this particular project as her creative debut after appearing in the equally rat-heavy *Willard* in '71, especially considering she looks more like a mouse than anyone you'll see in your entire life. (*ZC*)

RATS: NIGHT OF TERROR

Dir. Bruno Mattei / 1983

Bronx warriors fight to escape from New York rats!

Welcome, friends, to the year 225 A.B. (After Bomb), where this heaping helping of Mad Max Bolognese begins. The international success of both *Mad Max 1* and *2* heralded a new age of Italian genre rip-offs. One couldn't really call them Spaghetti Westerns, so we'll refer to them as "post-apocalypse puttanescas." *Rats: Notte De Terrore* differs from other films in this genre as it's not a direct rip-off of *Mad Max* or *Escape from New York*. Instead, it mixes the attack-in-a-dilapidated-building zombie theme with an animal-revenge plot. Throw in some post-apocalyptic bikers for good measure and we've got a movie. The threadbare plot concerns post-nuke America splitting into two societies. In a reverse *Time Machine* variation, the subterranean dwellers are sophisticated scientists, while biker barbarians with mohawks, spikes and chains duke it out above ground. Into one of these bombed-out cities rides a ragtag group of movie punk bikers, who soon encounter the titular rats. These rodents are



somewhat pitiful to watch onscreen, seeing as how they're actually guinea pigs frantically trying to lick off gray paint. In one of the not-so-special effects sequences, the rats attack en masse, looking like a bunch of licorice mice attached to a conveyor belt. Director Mattei manages some nice gore pieces, including rats exploding out of a corpse and a rodent entering the vagina and exiting the mouth of a biker gal. Great character development comes in the form of gang members with names like Chocolate, Video and Deuce. Video claims there isn't a video game he hasn't played, but when the group comes upon a bank computer monitor he utters, "Dam, I'm never going to get to play a real video game!" And hold onto your seats for the *Planet of the Apes*-style ironic ending.

Inexplicably, this movie opened in Germany with the title *Riffs III: Die Ratten Von Manhattan*. I can only surmise that the 'Riffs' reference is to *The Warriors* gang of the same name. That possibly clears up what *Riffs I* is, but what the hell is *Riffs II*? Any response, Germany? (*JS*)

RAW DEAL

Dir. John Irvin / 1986

An ex-FBI agent goes undercover with the mob.

The head of FBI's son gets murdered by a gang of mobsters whose glamourous lifestyles "make Ted Turner look like a derelict," so the chief calls up his old pal Mark Kamisnky for help. Arnold Schwarzenegger is Kaminsky, an unhappily married small town sheriff who got kicked out of the bureau for being too rough with a suspect. His wife resents their new rural life, but Kaminsky's job as sheriff doesn't lack for excitement. He's introduced chasing down a criminal motorcyclist and setting him on fire by tossing a cigar into a pool of gasoline. Then he goes home and his wife throws a cake at his head.

He reluctantly agrees to go undercover in the mob (in what is essentially a revenge mission) under one condition: if he's successful in bringing down their organization, he'll be reinstated into the FBI. He fakes his own death by blowing up an entire oil refinery, buys some fancy new duds and joins the mob. At one point he accompanies fellow gangster Max (Robert Davi) to a neon-illuminated mixed-gender strip club called Kinks to find a shady character. Kaminsky chases the guy down, splashes red paint all over his face, shows him a mirror and tells him, "This is what you'll look like dead." One Kinks patron is a mohawked punk nestled in amongst the other weirdos and lowlifes.

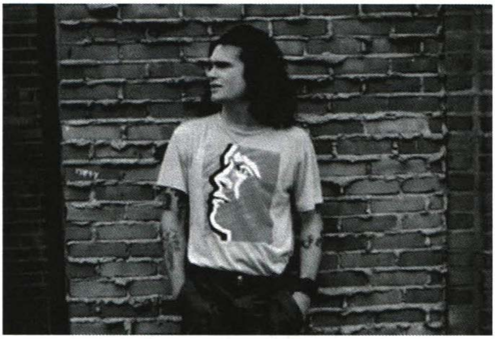
Raw Deal isn't as good as some of Schwarzenegger's other mid-'80s action pictures. The difference in quality can be clearly observed when the film attempts a "gearing up" scene like the iconic one from *Commando*, but director Irvin fails to pull off the flourishes with the same success. What *Raw Deal* does have is Schwarzenegger speeding around a quarry in a convertible listening to "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones while blasting guys with a machine gun, so it's still an enduring example of the cinematic arts. (*TS*)

REALITY 86'D

Dir. Dave Markey / 1991

A man-in-the-trenches Super 8 document of Black Flag's 1986 national tour for the release of their In My Head album.

Desperate Teenage Lovedolls director Markey captures the legendary band at the brink of implosion while performing across the country with guitarist Greg Ginn's instrumental project Gone and the filmmaker's own group Painted Willie. The trip is laid out in unnarrated segments, focusing on the various distractions, disappointments and inconsequential adventures of the road. The tour's main cargo vehicle is a massive box truck emblazoned with the monolithic Black Flag bars across the loading door. Henry Rollins seems to have left home without packing any shirts. His roadie and close friend Joe Cole interviews stylish New Romantic teenagers, who explain that they wear makeup to "excite girls." For a doomed group so notoriously racked by the rigors of travel, each member of Black Flag and the other bands seems to be having a great time, going so far as to sing John Denver songs on a snowy mountaintop. Unlike other "free-form" documentaries, the looseness of *Reality 86'd* works in its favor, making the viewer feel almost personally familiar with the unshaven, exhausted and lovable highway soldiers onscreen. (*ZC*)



REBEL HIGH

Dir. Harry Jakobs / 1987

A high school is too damn wild.

A wack-ass wacky-ass teenage groanfest complete with transvestites, disability humor, cartoon sound effects and a bumper crop of

goofball Hollywoodized new wavers. Rather than attempt to discern a plot, let's just go over some of this film's finest moments. Leather-punk bullies call the school nerd "pussyface," string him up by his tie and then have an archery battle in the hallway. Mohawked turds wait impatiently in line for sex-ed classes, a pompadoured punk hobbles through the school with a head wound and the most impressive set of liberty spikes you'll ever see jut from a student hanging out in the faculty parking lot.

The school is trashed, with "Butthole Surfer" scrawled on the wall and wreckage from an ongoing race war in the corridors. Tough kid Leroy wears a shirt that says "I CAN CURE VIRGINITY" while his female classmate sports "DRILL ME." A skinhead with green scalp stubble is forced to learn at gunpoint. Public access-caliber children's show music tinks and dweedles throughout. Bearded police detective Sergeant Major has the biggest ears in show business and his partner, Prince Thor, is a cocker spaniel in a trench coat and hat. The token fat kid is a hot dog-pounding Caucasian dweeb that is here seriously miscast as an Ebonics-spouting African-American bruiser. The cafeteria is overrun by homicidal new wave manimals until the school's most pathetic geek manages to engage them in a good old-fashioned pie fight.

The cast consists largely of members from the once-prominent Canadian Yuk-Yuks comedy troupe, but I can only imagine that this was an enormous dip in their careers. Certainly, most everyone involved in this tax shelter project (including the director) went on to do anything *but* movies. Sadly, the nerd-with-gray-mohawk from the VHS box never makes an appearance, but there *is* a career-best performance by one-time-only actress Cha Cha Da Vinci. (*ZC*)

REBEL STORM

Dir. Francis Schaeffer / 1990

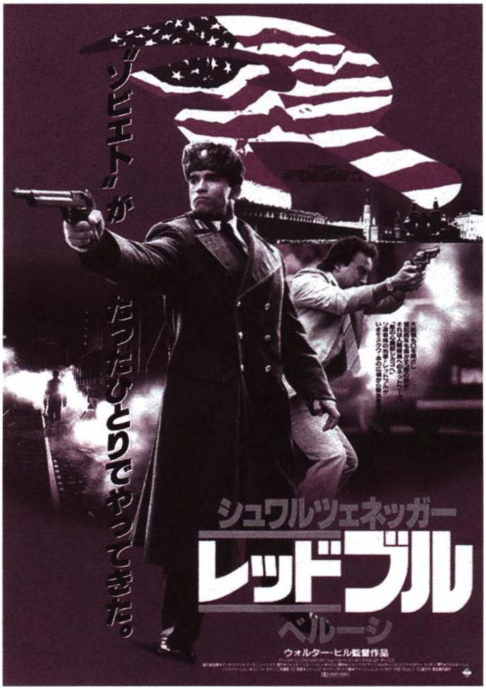
Yet another goddamned *Road Warrior* rip-off.

Zach Galligan (*Gremlins*) is the star and here he gives his mother yet another reason to pester him to go back to college. The actor then proceeds to embarrass his grandparents by partaking in a steamy lovemaking scene where he violently sucks on a boobie. John Rhys-Davies shows up wearing space glasses and sporting futuristic muttonchops. He finds a vibrator and turns it on, which freaks him out. A punk girl with a Chelsea cut works at a shelter. A woman in a bleached flattop and leather dress beats a man in jail while the guards watch in horny excitement. There's a beauty contest featuring old and/or fat women with punk hairdos. This film tries to be a comedy more than a sci-fi/action film. Some jokes are funny, like the monkey dressed as a human. But hell, that's ALWAYS funny. Most of the gags are lame-o to the max, such as the scene where an old man eats beans and obvious post-production fart sounds are added. (*BC*)

RED HEAT

Dir. Walter Hill / 1988

No-nonsense Russian cop (Arnold Schwarzenegger) teams up with wiseass American cop (Jim Belushi).


ソビエトが
たったひとりでやってきた。
シュワルツェネッガー
レッドブル
ベルーシ
ウォルター・ヒル監督作品

This had the first U.S. movie crew to ever be allowed in Red Square. Arnold shows up naked and fights in the snow. Belushi and Laurence Fishburne go on "funbag patrol." Peter Boyle is the angry chief, who uses new age music and tropical fish to relieve stress. An old joke now, but you saw it here first. People forget that Walter Hill invented a lot of these buddy-cop archetypes. Pretty much every action film from *Lethal Weapon* to *Bad Boys 2* owes everything to this guy. This movie actually doesn't have a lot of action scenes, but the climactic game of chicken between two buses is fun. Pruitt Taylor Vince, Gina Gershon and Brion James all have brief roles. Near the beginning, a punk girl with giant blond hair sits amongst thugs in a bar. Overall, the gunshots are loud and Belushi is not-so-surprisingly well cast as an obnoxious American. (*BC*)

RED NIGHTS

Dir. Izhak Hanooka / 1988

Big city dreams die hard.

Stop me if you've heard this one already: young country boy Randy spends his last dime on a bus ride out to Hollywood. The plan is to break through big as an actor, but those bright lights cast long shadows over naked ladies and powdered noses.

Randy joins a crowd of spectators watching the production of a film. When the crew wraps and the audience disperses, three starstruck street punks scatter into the night. A later shoot provides a bumper crop of LA punk teens, all looking as listless as *Red Nights'* lead actor. Gravel-throated tough guy icon William Smith is sadly underused, and even miscredited on the back of the VHS box. Slammin' jammin' blammin' new age soundtrack provided by Tangerine Dream. (*ZC*)

RED SURF

Dir. H. Gordon Boos / 1990

A pack of jet-skiing, cocaine-dealing party boys led by Mark (George Clooney) end up in trouble on both sides of the law.

The poor man's *Point Break*. When not crashing cars, evading police and watching men get ripped to shreds by wild dogs, the fun-loving outlaws of *Red Surf* spend a great deal of time worrying over their girlfriends. The testosterone-questionability is magnified by the boys' fashion sense: Attila wears a Grateful Dead patch while True Blue sports a Catholic crucifix on both his necklace and earring (not to mention his impossibly zany dual-level buzzcut). The most impressive character onscreen is the argumentative man with the geometric mohawk, visible for only a moment during a botched narcotics deal in a sleazy nightclub. Also, 1990-era LA evidently contained a little-known subculture of nerdy Caucasian cholos, though their hard-knuckled drug kingpin impressively deals with his enemies by dumping them through a trap door into a basement full of wolves. Clooney and company's wizened jet ski mechanic Doc is played by Gene Simmons, who is arguably better as an actor than a musician, though his performance here is nowhere near as powerful as his Velvet Von Ragnar in the incredible *Never Too Young to Die* (see pg. 239). *Red Surf* flounders in the drab purgatory between action and drama, its fistfights and explosions punctuated by drug counseling and unwanted pregnancy. (*ZC*)

REFORM SCHOOL GIRLS

Dir. Tom DeSimone / 1986

A straight-faced send-up of the women-in-prison genre.

Played for camp value rather than true exploitation authenticity, *Reform School Girls* is a hugely entertaining and totally successful tribute to the sorts of films where scantily-clad bad girls survive abuse and sexual humiliation at the hands of sadistic wardens. It also pays homage to the decades-old traditions of juvenile delinquent cinema; its story of dead-end kids in the danger zone is like a Runaways song brought to life. Sherri Stoner plays Lisa, an innocent girl who gets shipped off to Pridemore Reform School where she's immediately stripped naked, robbed of her stuffed bunny and sprayed with DDT. The new arrivals are greeted by sadistic Nurse Edna, horrifyingly played by an aging, obese Pat Ast (star of Andy Warhol's *Heat*).

The queen bitch on the inside is punk/metal icon Wendy O. Williams of the Plasmatics in her only co-starring film role. Thirty-seven years old when the film was made, she's the world's most haggard teenager. But to her credit, she fully commits to the part and explodes onscreen, threatening girls with razor blade toothbrushes and displaying the film's definitive statement on her T-shirt: "Rock 'n' Roll or Fuck Off!" She's never seen without her enormous boots, even in the showers. She's not the only rocker in Pridemore; her gang wears fashions that include leopard-print tights, torn fishnet stockings and leather bikinis, with one girl in particular taking incarcerated new wave fashion to dizzying heights. The school's evil warden is played by Sybil Danning, who broadcasts ridiculous prayers over the P.A. system every night that detail all the ways in which the girls are disgusting and depraved. This movie maintains a perfect balance between satire and sincerity. (*TS*)

RELEASE

Dir. Brant Sersen / 1998

A shoestring document of the various vein-bulging factions of late '90s East Coast hardcore.

This is an earnest, bare-bones shot-on-video *Decline*-format exploration into the more modern, muscular variations on punk, largely bred from the Eastern U.S.' decidedly macho scenes. Fans throw in their two cents on the meaning of the movement, as do musicians from Madball, Agent Orange, Bad Religion, Sick of It All and vegan warriors Earth Crisis. The subjects are often interviewed in a cramped backstage or sweat-clouded practice space. Camcorder footage of several of the bands captures the stripped-down energy between them and their crowd. The filmmakers also cover straight edge, the politics of slamming, house shows, teenage record label founders and other features intrinsic to the HxC scene. There's an often impressive sense of dedication and sincerity among the people onscreen despite an alarming number of goatees, not to mention the presence of Blink 182 and oxymoronic "Christian punks" MxPx. The comforts afforded by punk's '90s success are also addressed, leading to much less inspiring footage of stadium-sized festivals. Hardcore's tarnished veneer is best represented by one frontman doing breakdance acrobatics in a clean, white Rancid T-shirt before a teeming crowd of fresh-faced youth. Truly "hawdkoah." (*ZC*)

REMOTE CONTROL

Dir. Jeff Lieberman / 1987

Technology makes people mentally incapable, uncommunicative and—in this movie's case—murderous.

The writer/director behind killer worm epic *Squirm* and psycho hillbilly masterpiece *Just Before Dawn* tries his hand at garish sci-fi with this good-natured, fluorescent-lit, VHS-centric failure reminiscent of his equally paranoid drug epic *Blue Sunshine*. A mysterious videotape called "Remote Control" causes its viewers to commit homicidal acts. Only Cosmo (Kevin Dillon) and his video store boss can peel back the extraterrestrial mind control veil and save the video-obsessed shut-ins of our planet.

In this manufactured world, futuristic new wave apparel is a youth standard. A cornucopia of spandex aerobics fashions dot the landscape. Though the era is intended to be 1987-modern, space jumpsuits and 90-degree angle haircuts abound, especially among the clientele of Cosmo's video store. Even a classic '50s rocker has a neon green stripe through his pompadour. Just before closing time, a bleach-n-vinyl waver couple nab a few tapes for the night. The *Jetsons*-chic manager of a competing movie shop goes on a rampage, leaving a modest number of postmodern corpses in his wake. At mall business Vid-O-Rama, the Remote Control in-store display manages to gain mental control of a sneering mob of gaudy punks. But the true Ground Zero for mass-mind mangulation is the local new wave club, where the video plays on mammoth monitors while unwitting rainbow-clad nightlifers await their zombification. (*ZC*)

REMOTE CONTROL

Dir. Óskar Jónasson / 1993

Axel must find his mother's remote control or she'll pull
the plug on the bathtub filled with his fish.

Sandra Bullock films must get released in other countries, so it's only fair that we get their crap in return. This film could have been fun. Many wacky adventures could have been had with this plot, but nope. The main character runs into a few metalheads at their house, a group of bootleggers in their hideout and evil club owners at their... uh...club. That's it. Granted, there is a funny scene of people falling through a floor, with a particularly good crash onto a table. Axel's sister wears a stud belt and has her blond hair up in liberty spikes. This actress' name is Margrét Hugrún Gústavsdóttir. The actual English translation of the film's Icelandic title is *Sodomy Reykjavík* and the cast features three actors named Björn. (BC)

REPO MAN

Dir. Alex Cox / 1984

A disenchanted young man stumbles into the automobile
repossession business and encounters government agents,
extraterrestrials, an assortment of weirdos and a Chevy
Malibu with special powers.

It's hard to be even remotely objective about *Repo Man*, as the movie has become an intrinsic part of our lives. Like the character Miller's proverbial "lattice of coincidence," the film is on a collective plane where odd overlaying connections and references will inevitably beget thoughts of *Repo Man*. Its dialogue has entered into the punk vernacular and its philosophical outlook is intertwined with our own beliefs. Much of this is by design, as the film encapsulates the early '80s and captures the essence of all things fucked up about the era. Reagan had just been re-elected, the Cold War (with its threat of nuclear apocalypse) was going strong, the religious right became more prominent...everybody was ready to sell out and the future looked pretty damned bleak.

Universal Pictures was none too confident in the movie's charms and distributed the film for a short time, holding it at arm's length. It was then given an additional theatrical run in select cities, partly because of a national interest in the soundtrack. Released on San Andreas Records, a one-off label owned by Universal, the record showcased an efficient lineup of some of Southern California's top hardcore acts. Side A of the LP features classic tunes by Black Flag, Suicidal Tendencies and the Circle Jerks. The movie's theme song is an original composition by punk godfather Iggy Pop and was produced by former Doors manager-turned-rock author Danny Sugerman (whose name is misspelled on the LP's credits). Sugerman (who was kicking a heroin habit at the time) was the singer's manager and the song is also a detox tune for Iggy and guitarist Steve Jones. *Repo Man* came about during a low point in Pop's career and it was good to hear that Iggy Stooge was still capable of solid Rock & Roll. Iggy actually read the script and based his lyrics on Alex Cox's screenplay. Some of the words comment on things that were in the screenplay, but never appeared in the movie. For example, nobody uses Otto's "head for an ashtray" in the finished film. Other lyrics are prime Pop, with memorable couplets like: "I didn't get fucked and I didn't get kissed / I got so fucking pissed" and "I'm looking for the joke with a microscope." Iggy's song perfectly captures Otto's (and much of his generation's) perspective on the world. In addition to ex-Sex Pistol Jones, the track features Clem Burke and Nigel Harrison from Blondie. Jones, Burke and Harrison had also played together in the short-lived new wave supergroup Chequered Past. The song "Repo Man" is first heard in an instrumental over the film's opening credits. The vocal version is heard over the (backwards rolling) closing credits.

Another major contributor to the film's score is The Plugz, who aren't as well known as the other acts on the album. One of the first Latino punk bands, they backed Bob Dylan (!) on the *David Letterman Show* and eventually morphed into musical outfit The Cruzados. The Plugz pitch in two tunes and compose the film's instrumental score. Their movie music incorporates twangy guitar, Steppenwolf riffs and spacey synthesizers to create a surf-styled Spaghetti Western/spy sound. The Plugz' Spanish language take on "Secret Agent Man" (aka "Hombre Secreto") epitomizes their deft combination of musical genres and subtly underscores Alex Cox's Latin American sympathies. Not all of The Plugz instrumental music appears on the soundtrack album, but a big chunk is contained in the final track, appropriately titled "Reel Ten."

Also featured on the soundtrack is Burning Sensations' cover of the classic Modern Lovers tune "Pablo Picasso." Burning Sensations are a mostly forgotten new wave band (founded by a guy from The Motels) that had a hit video on MTV with the annoying "Belly of the Whale." The Circle Jerks' second contribution to the film is an easy-listening version of their thrashing tune "When The Shit Hits The Fan" and the band appears onscreen, clad in leisure suits while playing this song. The Jerks' regularly-changing lineup features legendary drummer Chuck Biscuits (on guitar!) this go-round. Zander Schloss (who plays Kevin onscreen) joined the Circle Jerks after meeting them during the production of *Repo Man*. Schloss' band Juicy Bananas play the instrumental backing to the remaining track "Bad Man," which is basically an extended monologue written as an audition piece for the character of Lite and serves as a suitably greasy extension of Sy Richardson's memorable performance.

Jimmy Buffett and ska band The Untouchables have screen cameos, but none of their music appears in the film.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, the soundtrack's great, but is only a small ingredient. It's a rare collaboration featuring a gifted filmmaker with an inspired production staff, a legendary European cinematographer and the *perfect* cast delivering their lines like their dialogue was destiny. This is one of those films where each and every element came together—from cast to crew to authentic dirtbag LA locations—and mutated into a one-of-a-kind, out-of-control creation. Cox's complex script is a loose variation on a film noir scenario into which the British filmmaker mixes a diverse array of elements into a somewhat coherent story (though repeated viewings help) about a '64 Chevy Malibu with extraterrestrials in the trunk and the various parties attempting to possess said vehicle and the contents therein.

But the plot is secondary to Cox's dense and unpredictable vision that incorporates social satire, punks, government agents, televangelists, politics, aliens, literary references (including William S. Burroughs, Isaac Asimov, Tom Wolfe and L. Ron Hubbard), disaffected youth, sushi jokes, tabloids, generic product labels, pine tree air fresheners, brilliant monologues, a mad scientist, potential revolutionaries, men in black, plates of shrimp, the first cinematic airbag joke, conspiracy theories, old ladies and lots and lots of automobiles. There are references to a variety of films like *Kiss Me Deadly*, *Kings Of The Road*, *Them*, *The American Friend*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *Timerider*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *War Of The Worlds* and there's even an homage to the Milgram Experiment. But all of these pop culture elements would be nothing without the film's sharply-drawn and fully-realized characters, most of them searching for something and seemingly ready to sell out at any opportunity. For the majority of them, the Malibu represents the means to achieve all of their wildest dreams.

But what of the punks? Cox treats them with as much cynicism and satire as the rest of the denizens of "Edge City." The film's protagonist, Otto (Emilio Estevez in his greatest performance), is an unmotivated Los Angeles punk stuck in a post-adolescent, minimum wage-funded downward spiral. His initial appearance is only modestly punkish, with combat boots, a buzzcut and an earring. Otto has burnt-out hippie parents, a bad attitude and sings Black Flag songs to himself when he gets drunk. Basically, he's in a situation we can all empathize with. Despite his rebellious tendencies, Otto's personality is essentially a clean slate. Throughout the film his behavior is influenced by an assortment of characters, most notably mentor Bud (Harry Dean Stanton), who indoctrinates Otto into the predatory world of repo-dom. After initially offering some superficial, beer-spilling resistance, Otto quickly "sells out" and transforms from punk rocker into car repossessor; dressing like a square and working on consignment.

Speaking of blank-slate sellout schmucks, there's always Kevin (Schloss), Otto's "friend." The pair gets fired by Mr. Humphries (Charles Hopkins) near the film's beginning and soon thereafter Kevin throws a wild party at his parents' house. During the party, Kevin sports a temporary mohawk (which Schloss has called a "pose-hawk") and mostly looks like your classic tall, geeky, glasses-wearing, pimply, punkish nerd. Dreaming of moving up the management chain in a fast food restaurant, Kevin sucks up to most everyone, and shows up sporadically throughout the film. Look carefully in the background during the scene at Mr. Humphries' house and you can see the hypocritical poseur in the background decorating a Christmas tree!

Repo Man's most noteworthy punks are possibly the best-conceived examples in history. The trio of trouble: Archie, Duke and Debbi spend the majority of the film deep into a clumsy, petty crime spree. They rob convenience stores, steal pharmaceutical drugs, sniff generic butyl nitrate, dine & dash and—at one point—carjack the Malibu. Dick Rude (Duke) helped Cox develop his screenplay and, in particular, its punk rock elements. Rude was Cox's original casting choice for Otto but, like many aspects of the film, things shifted around for the better, as Rude's portrayal of Duke is one of the film's acting highlights. With his shaved head, odd beard, Sid Vicious T-shirt and sociopathic tendencies, he has the look and behavior of your classic juvenile delinquent punker nailed. He also has some of the film's most memorable lines ("Let's go do some crimes...") and, when gunned down during a standoff at a liquor store, he blames society for making him a petty criminal. Otto calls bullshit and points out that Duke is just a "white suburban punk." Like the rest of the cast, Duke seems to be willing to bite the hook and, at one point, whimpers to Deb that he wants her to have his baby because "everybody else does it."

At the film's start, Debbi is Otto's bored girlfriend. While he's off securing a generic beer for his woman, Duke (who just got out of juvie) hops in the sack with her. There was a fairly explicit sex scene that was cut from the final film where, instead of Duke showing up in Kevin's parents' bed, it was Archie performing cunnilingus on Debbi. The scene was much more graphic then any other "intimate" scene in the picture, especially compared to Otto's back-seat liaison with Leila (Olivia Barash). In the final cut of the film, Archie remains the "third wheel" of the gang as Duke and Debbi are romantically linked. Portrayed by busy character actor Miguel Sandoval, Archie is the most physically imposing of the gang. He's tall, has a mohawk, wears chains and a dog collar, carries a shotgun, and is frequently bare-chested with a vest—your typical hard-assed punk. Despite appearances, Archie is downright goofy with a comical voice and zany laugh. Debbi (Jennifer Balgobin) is a little more "exotic" than your average cinematic street urchin, with a dark complexion and British accent, alternating between liberty spikes and a trimmed mohawk.

Repo Man has been proclaimed the Ultimate Punk Film. Such qualifications are mighty but, as mentioned earlier, the film's soundtrack reigns while viciously capturing the societal elements that energized the whole punk movement. Unlike similar films of the time, you get the feeling that Cox truly loves punk rock and is fascinated by the phenomenon rather than treating it as a kooky fad. Cox's follow-up to *Repo Man*, *Sid and Nancy*, is more of an undiluted punk picture but, then again, *Repo Man* had a greater impact on the scene. So what is the ultimate punk film? Who gives a shit really, as such simplistic declarations are usually the product of hack critics hoping to get their quote on a video box. If *Repo Man* is an "ultimate" anything I'd say it's the Ultimate '80s Film, a landmark accomplishment that captures many elements and tightly winds them into one of the most representative works of the era. *(SH)*

ALEX COX

Director – *REPO MAN*

DAM: You've said *Repo Man* is largely based on your own experiences. Are there any examples you can share of scenes or themes that were taken from your life?

AC: It was based on a very limited time I spent assisting a repo man on his nightly duties. He was named Mark Lewis and worked for GMAC. So the stories and scenes are based not so much on things that happened to me but things that he and his colleagues told me. A lot of Harry Dean Stanton's dialogue ("only an asshole gets killed for a car" etc.) came directly from Mark, who was quite the raconteur.

Being that this was your first full-scale picture, what were some of the hardships and chaotic moments that come about while shooting?

The shoot wasn't particularly chaotic, except for the stunt coordinator who was superannuated if not actually dangerous. Otherwise I remember it as being hot—shot in August mainly in downtown Los Angeles in the days when the air quality was really bad—slow moving and sometimes boring.

So much time on a "real" movie is spent hanging around while trucks are moved and Teamsters tell long stories involving other films they've worked on. The shoot of *Repo Man* was six weeks long. The shoot of *Repo Chick*, which we did in January of this year, was 11 days. I found the latter a lot more creative and rewarding.

Otto is an everyman character but also a member of the counterculture. Was he envisioned this way when you first conceived the film, and was that culture something you were personally interested in?

Otto is more a blank page than an everyman, I think. What I found interesting in his character was how a supposedly "counterculture" character like a punk rocker could be quickly assimilated into a reactionary and hierarchical system—in this case the repo business, but it could also be the military, say—without even changing his appearance: the Suicidal Tendencies T-shirt was replaced by a suit jacket but the haircut remained the same.

I was certainly interested in punk, but as a revolutionary movement rather than a fashion thing. In that sense, as Buñuel said about Surrealism, the movement completely failed. But it was inspirational for a while.

The dialogue—specifically between the repo men—is incredible. What did the actual repo workers think of the finished movie?

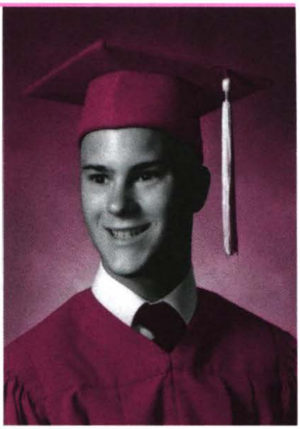
I think Mark and his colleagues liked the film. One repo man I met later disagreed with the "lite" portrayal of the business...he said it was much more frightening and dangerous than the film suggested. But Mark was very pragmatic and avoided confrontation, or even direct meetings with his clients, whenever possible.

The film is not only regarded as one of the best of its era, it has also proved to have timeless appeal. Additionally, many members of the cast have gone on to work with you throughout your career. What do you personally think it is that has made *Repo Man* such a powerful force with audiences and actors?

I don't really know. It's beautifully photographed and very well acted. There is some funny dialogue, much of it odd things which people actually said to me. It's authentic, I think, in its portrayal of the GMAC repo guys at that time, and of the punk culture of Los Angeles in the early '80s. And the soundtrack album, which was a good sampler of LA punk from that era, helped give the film an early push when Universal wanted to bury it.

DICK RUDE

"Duke" – *REPO MAN*



DR: I was discovered by some fellows from the American Film Institute who were doing their student projects. They needed someone of my age in their short film, and that person was Ramón Menéndez who later went on to do *Stand and Deliver*. So, through that association, I immediately became a mascot for film students who were ten years my senior: who were also into the punk rock scene that was just burgeoning in LA. We became a fairly close-knit group of people who were interested in film and music and art, that got immediately entranced by the punk rock movement in Los Angeles.

DAM: Is that how you met Alex Cox?

I met Alex through Ramón and Tom Richmond, who was also at the American Film Institute. He's a director of photography, and some of these cats that were going to school there had also gone to UCLA. So there was a network of people that all knew each other.

When did you first start to hear any word on *Repo Man* as a project? When did that first come up for you?

Well, that actually progressed fairly quickly from the time of my association with Alex. I guess I must have been about 15 or 16 and I'd written a screenplay with a friend of mine by the name of Brant Reiter. It was a 17-page short called "Leather Rubbernecks," about a couple of kids who get drafted and it was very sardonic and edgy, black humor. I mean, very much in line with *Repo Man*. Alex had this idea that he could raise the cash to make this short film that we had scripted, and when that didn't pan out, he later incorporated that into *Repo Man*, which was inspired by me. He had my bald-headed cap and gown graduation picture from high school above his typewriter when he started writing, so I was very, very much a part of *Repo Man*—from inspiration to writing to acting and I participated on pretty much every level.

When the time came and we decided to move forward with *Repo Man* because the grant money didn't come through for "Leather Rubbernecks," initially Alex tried to get that going through UCLA. It was a year before the film was actually made, and instead of Emilio Estevez and Harry Dean Stanton, it was going to be me and Lee Ving, the lead singer of Fear. We were gonna play the two lead roles in the film and we'd started casting the other parts. Several of those people actually did end up being in the picture.

REPO MAN
PIK 'N PAY
SPECIAL

When and how did you end up falling into the Duke character?

I have to be careful in answering this question because I don't want to sound like a whiny bitch. When the producers finally got enough money to make the film professionally, I did all the casting sessions and read with everyone and almost to the end of the game I was still under the impression that I was starring in the picture. What I didn't know was that the producers had something else in mind, which was to use someone who had a bit more of a name so they could ultimately be able to get a better distribution deal or have some sort of name recognition attached. So, it was kind of after we had gone through all the casting that I found out I wasn't playing the lead role of Otto, but rather the role of Duke.

But you ended up enjoying the part? Obviously you're really into it onscreen.

Well, you have to understand, I was 19 years old and I had helped write a screenplay and up until that point, I'd just been paying my dues doing student films. So for me it couldn't have been more exciting that I was actually getting to make a feature film that, in my mind, was completely mine—not completely, but, shit, as much a shared experience with Alex. I mean my words were being spoken by the characters and I was getting to co-star in a feature film. All that stuff when you're 19 lifts your ego up. So, I didn't really have any issues at that time or ever. I just really enjoyed what I was doing and participated as much as I could. And I had the luxury and the latitude to be able to script my own character and make it what I wanted it to be, so for me that was huge.

Since you were involved in that movie on several different levels, but it was kind of the first big feature for a lot of the people who were working on the film, what was it like on set? Did that excitement create a wild environment?

I didn't really recognize it as being wild in comparison to what I'd already been doing. It was all business. It seemed to be a really well-oiled machine. I don't recall there being a lot of snafus. Everyone knew exactly what they were doing and there was an incredible amount of professionalism about it. So it didn't seem to be chaotic—the making of it, at any rate—but you always have your little anecdotes and things that happen along the way, like with the Chevy Malibu. One of the funny things that happened was that the Chevy Malibu actually did get stolen, from the car lot that it was parked on one night when we weren't shooting. So, that was a funny little bit, and those kinds of things happened, but in terms of that crew of people, I think there's always been this feeling about the way somebody dresses or what they're interests might be as far as art or music that makes most other people believe that they're out of their minds, or out of control. The true artists that were involved in the punk rock genre really did have their shit together. It was more about expression and creativity on a level of professionalism that would match anyone else's idea, but that sort of stigma of "Oh, he has a mohawk," for some reason tends to threaten people.

Speaking of that, this was a fairly early film to have that much emphasis on punk, especially for a studio-backed movie. Obviously, that's a big deal. Were most of the people involved who were playing the punk parts from the actual scene? It seemed to be very aware and sincere about how the punk stuff was represented.

I didn't know most of the people. I know that there were some who were involved. At that time, the scene was still fairly new so certainly people had some exposure to it and some of them were a little more a part of it. Of course, we had the Circle Jerks doing their acoustic lounge performance in the film, so you had people like that who were truly ensconced in and a part of that movement. I think most importantly, the people who were making the film—Alex, Peter McCarthy, one of the producers, myself and few others—certainly knew what time it was.

It was a big, Hollywood movie about punk but it wasn't just pointing at them, saying, "What are these things?"

Yeah, I agree. And I think that it's similar to the idea of finding some panoramic, cinematic backdrop to put in a movie, and then using that in and of itself is a waste unless you have it being relative to the story, it draws too much attention to itself and it takes you out of the story or out of the picture. And in this case, that movement that was going on was as much a part of the story as the story itself. So, it didn't draw attention to itself in this way of going, "Hey, look what we're doing, we're using punk rock." No, this is how these people live and what they're going through. Even when you talk about the generic branding that was going on with the food. That shit was real. The supermarkets had generic cans of food on their shelves. It didn't say "food," but it said whatever it was, "dishwashing detergent" and "beer," it might as well have said "food."

So once everything was wrapped up, do you recall how the studio reacted to the finished product?

Universal didn't really have any participation in the making of the film, and at the time were also going through a regime restructuring, so by the time the film was finished and ready to go, Universal didn't know what to do with it. They didn't like it. Especially, you have these new guys that came in and they were like, "What is this? We're not going to release this." This belonged to the old Universal crew and they didn't know what they were doing. We were stuck there for a minute.

One of the things that I think is important to recognize about *Repo Man*, and I think most people do, is the music and the soundtrack. We had gotten a deal with MCA to release the soundtrack, and MCA put the soundtrack out well before the movie was planned to be released. The album took off because suddenly you were getting this music out into the rest of the country where there wasn't access to it. That's what's so historically important about *Repo Man* is that it actually brought the music to the places where it previously hadn't existed and turned on a lot of people. And, as a result of that soundtrack starting to sell like wildfire, MCA, the parent company, had to put pressure on Universal to release the film.

A guy in their classics department whose name I forget, he actually got the film. Through MCA's pushing and his decision to try and get it out there, they actually released it, albeit for a week or two, and nobody really had a chance to go see it. I think they put it out at a time against a bunch of other blockbusters just so they could say they released it, but it certainly didn't stand a chance of garnering an audience. They just sort of buried it, but the soundtrack kept selling and people kept saying, "Wait a minute, I heard about that film. Where is it?" And eventually it came out on video and that's when it really started to take off.

REPOSSESSED

Dir. Bob Logan / 1990

Linda Blair stars as Nancy, a housewife and mother who is once again possessed by the devil in this parody of *The Exorcist*.

This lame spoof stars Leslie Nielsen as Father Mayii, a retired exorcist who comes back to battle the devil. Insert *Rocky/Rambo* sight gags here. It's not very funny, but it does have a few moments of goofball charm. There are tons of pea soup *Exorcist* jokes and many, many dated bits concerning Manuel Noriega, Michael Jackson, Geraldo Rivera and pro-wrestling (Jesse "The Body" Ventura and Mean Gene Okerlund even show up for a play-by-play). There's a Jim and Tammy Faye parody with Ned Beatty as the Bakker-type televangelist, Jake "Body by Jake" Steinfeld playing himself and lots of Benny Hill-style boob jokes. In fact, one of the boob jokes is major! When Mayii is giving a lecture to a group of college kids, a seductive girl distracts him. He tells her to pull down her dress (because she's hiking it up at the thigh), and SHA-ZAM!, she flashes her goodies!

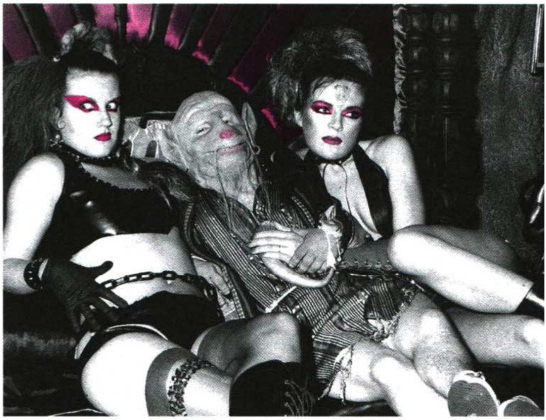
The grand finale of the movie occurs when Nielsen, the Pope and a rabbi start playing "Devil with a Blue Dress On" in full punk gear! A fitting end to a movie aimed squarely and unapologetically at 12-year-old boys. (*KK*)

THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN INVINCIBLE

Dir. Phillippe Mora / 1983

Captain Invincible (Alan Arkin) must stop the evil Mr. Midnight (Christopher Lee) from using his hypno-ray against the world.

This is one strange film. From the director of *Howling 2* comes a superhero musical. It could've easily worked without the songs, but thank Christ William Motzing wrote these brilliant numbers. My favorite: the "Bullshit" song the President of the United States sings. Well, "sings" is arguable; it's him shouting the word "bullshit" over and over again to a simple beat. Arkin seems to be in an entirely different film, and his dry humor holds everything together. He is so subtle and funny...bless his little heart. The ideas in this movie are crazy: Captain Invincible fights a vacuum cleaner, a man fires at the Captain with a machine gun made out of a giant fish and Christopher Lee sings a few basso profundo ditties. In Lee's evil army, the viewer can spot new wave girls and a man with half-conservative hair and a half-blue mohawk that you have to see to comprehend, much like the bulk of this brilliant pile. (*BC*)



RETURN OF THE FAMILY MAN

Dir. John Murlowski / 1989

A psychopath stalks unwitting youths through a run-down shack.

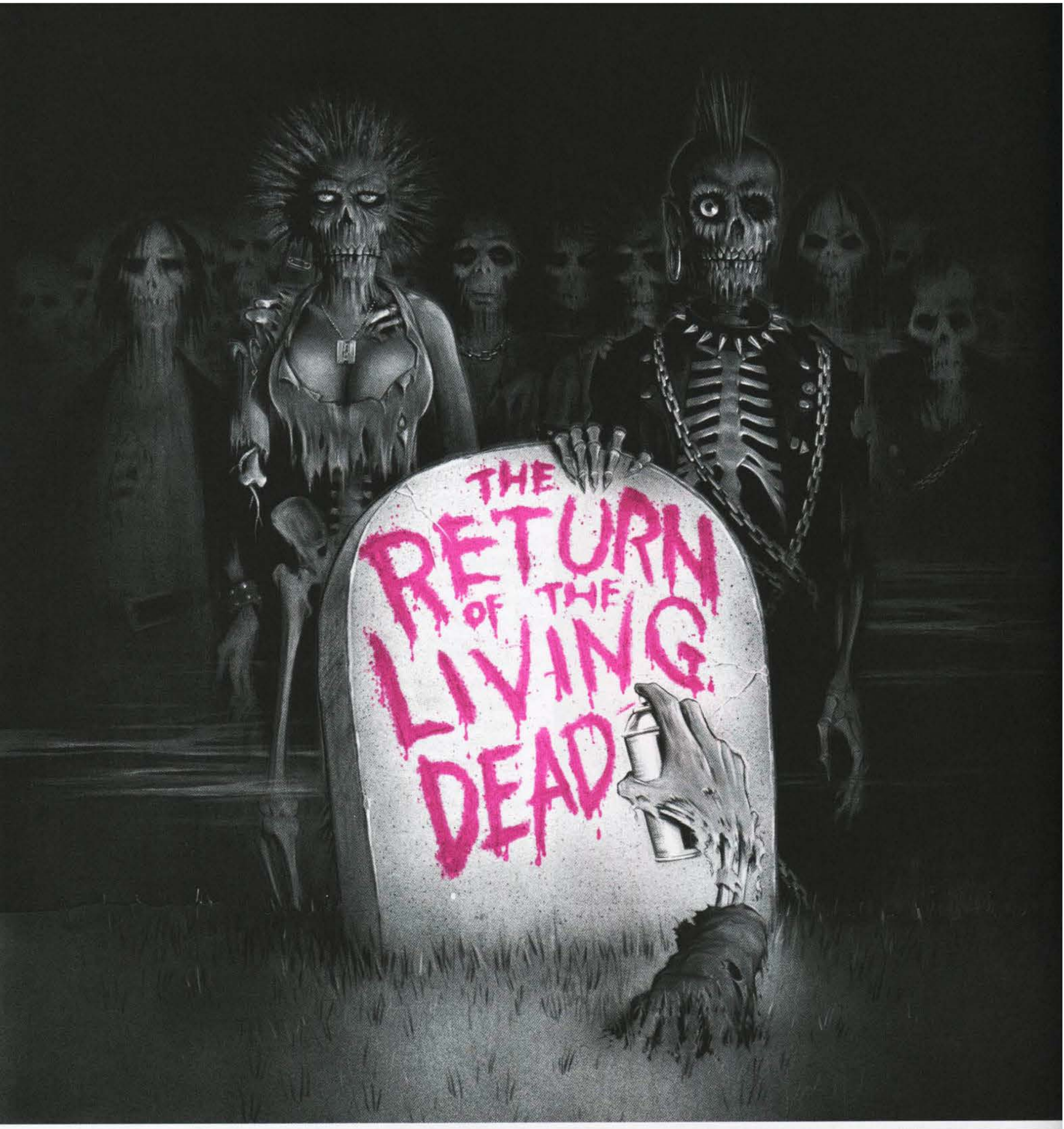
A pizza delivery boy witnesses an impressive motel massacre and heads off to hide in a rural vacation home. The shoddy vacation house is double-booked to a traveling ESL class (?) that includes a Billy Idol-aping Brit named Weasel who enjoys relaxing in a lawn chair while blasting punk tapes on his boombox. A bigger surprise is that the property belongs to a recently-escaped, record-breaking serial killer who's known as "The Family Man" due to his propensity for wiping out entire households in one fell swoop. The teens are picked off in the grand old tradition, the token punk making it much longer than the viewer might expect or enjoy. Strangely enough, this isn't a sequel to another film, just an appropriately lousy title from the dependably chintzy RaeDon Video. (*ZC*)

THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

Dir. Dan O'Bannon / 1985

A dangerous nerve gas is accidentally released and a handful of humans must fight for survival as the dead return to life.

In the early 1970s, the creative parties involved with the original *Night of the Living Dead* split into two separate camps, but it wasn't until 1985 that they had a *dead-to-dead* cinematic showdown. *Day of the Dead*, George Romero's grim follow-up to his *Dawn of the Dead*, didn't make as strong of a connection with audiences as its predecessors. Screenwriter John Russo had written a novelized sequel to *Night of the Living Dead* called *The Return of the Living Dead* back in '77, and a film adaptation had been juggled around for almost a decade with no luck. After a time, *Alien* scribe Dan O'Bannon was hired to polish Russo's script, and was eventually offered the director's chair and accepted under the condition that he could drastically rewrite the screenplay. O'Bannon cleverly reworked essential concepts of cannibalistic zombie cinema and also poked fun at the


THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

genre without resorting to outright parody. He aimed to tell a different type of story (with a different type of zombie) and, in many ways, structured his script as a reaction to much of what had gone on in the series before. Notably, this was the film that first introduced the controversial notion of fast zombies. These brain-eating ghouls also scheme, speak, give false information over police radios and are exceedingly hard to kill. When shooting, O'Bannon convinced a few of his zombie actors to eat actual calf brains for the cameras, and he gulped down a few in solidarity.

Romero's zombie opuses all feature a heavy subtext and incorporate social criticism and political allegories; O'Bannon is just as skeptical of the government, but chooses to convey his message through black humor and cynical plot twists. In selecting protagonists, the director/screenwriter pursued the opposite of the yuppies and jocks that permeate '80s horror films. Instead of boring, horny preppy assholes, *The Return of the Living Dead* features manic punks, making the picture not only a classic zombie flick but also one of the most wildly entertaining punk movies.

Freddy (Thom Matthews) is one of the first characters we meet, during his fateful first day on the job at the Uneeda Medical Supply warehouse. He's shown the ropes by Frank (James Karen) and the pair accidentally release 245 Trioxin, a deadly chemical military weapon erroneously stored in the warehouse basement. The Trioxin gas reanimates Uneeda's frozen cadavers as well as bodies buried in nearby Resurrection Cemetery. The vapor poisons Freddy and Frank, who both eventually start to exhibit symptoms of the living dead club themselves. Freddy has a blue-collar Punk Lite look, clad in jeans with wide suspenders, a sleeveless T with a rising sun image, a blue bandana tied around his ankle, an earring, an old-school baseball cap and a windbreaker/baseball jacket with the words "FUCK YOU" written on the back (O'Bannon re-shot some scenes so the film could be shown on TV, and in that footage Freddy's jacket says "TELEVISION VERSION"). Freddy's strangely wholesome girlfriend is Tina (Beverly Randolph), whose square wardrobe includes white canvas pants, matching sneakers, a pink sash belt and a curly elastic headband. Even though she's thoroughly un-punk, the first shot of Tina shows her hanging out with the most outrageous assortment of high-grade low-fashion alley trash in town.

Walking down a decaying block with Tina are Spider, Trash, Scuz, Casey and Chuck, a head-spinning assortment of punk rock/new wave archetypes. While not as complicated or fleshed out as the punks depicted in films like *Repo Man* and *Suburbia,* they do a good job with punk makeup as far as cinematic punks go (the excessive bandanas are another story). Spider (Miguel Nunez) is a tall, longhaired African-American punk. He wears camo pants, a studded armband and a red bandana around one ankle. He later proves himself to have the best survival instincts of the bunch. Casey (Jewel Shepard) has a giant red, blue and black semi-beehive hairdo, wears a pastel blue toga dress, combat boots, a red sash belt and big ugly plastic jewelry. Chuck (John Philbin) is a new waver with bad taste in haircuts and sport coats, and flaunts big red suspenders and a skinny tie. He carries a boombox that provides many of the punk rock tunes featured in the film. Scuz (Brian Peck) has a narrow blond mohawk, earrings, sunglasses and—the clincher—a black trench coat with buttons pinned to the front and a giant safety pin on the back. He also sports a skinny tie, dog tags, one pant leg rolled up, an ever-present comic book called *Weird Trips,* white and gray bandanas tied to one leg, a switchblade and a hatred of cops.

Showing up a bit later is a punk named Suicide (Mark Venturini) who was only invited along because he has wheels: a beat-up, graffiti-covered 1960 convertible Cadillac Eldorado. He gives the gang a ride to the cemetery, where they hang out and party while waiting for Freddy to get off work across the street. Suicide's hair is neatly shaved and divided into geometric sections that look like an "X" from behind. He also has a big "X" on the back of his biker jacket and an "X" on his Caddy. You could say that Suicide is sponsored by the letter "X." His pierced lip is chained to a clip on his ear, with additional chains hanging from his jacket and leather pants. Around his neck is a wide studded choker and he wears a T-shirt that says "Sniper." Of the group, he most closely matches the physical stereotype of a big, tough, aggro punk rocker. Suicide delivers a brilliant monologue while Trash is grabbing his crotch: "What do you think this is all about? You think this is a fucking costume? It's a way of life!"

Pants-pawing Trash (Linnea Quigley) is the most vivid punk of the bunch. She has short, bright red hair, a sleeveless leopard-spotted shirt (though not for long), a red and black vest, long black fingerless leather gloves, knit gray leg-warmers and a pair of snug black shorts covered with cute little skulls. She wears heavy mascara and has weird lines drawn on her face. When she walks she moves pelvis first and, in a deep dramatic voice, makes pronouncements about sex and death (sometimes combined). This movie ended up being Quigley's breakout role. It's not really a typical part for her, but she really gets into it and should have played more unhinged goth punkers. A lot of people remember her performance because she is buns-up naked for most of the movie... even after being turned into a zombie! While the punks are getting rowdy at the graveyard, Trash performs a gyrating striptease on a sarcophagus.

The cast is rounded out by a trio of lovably crusty character actors that nicely offset the punks. James Karen hams things up as Frank, and it is this veteran actor's over-the-top performance that clues the audience into the fact that *The Return of the Living Dead* is not to be taken too seriously. He also provides the film's most touching and emotional moment when he decides to kill himself rather than succumb to zombieness. Frank's no-nonsense boss Burt is played by Clu Gulager, a great character actor who has appeared in hundreds of movies and TV shows. Burt wears a Members Only jacket and ultimately becomes the leader of the survivors. Aside from the cemetery and warehouse, much of the film takes place at a funeral parlor run by mortician Ernie (Don Calfa), who has white hair and a stylish, formaldehyde-splattered jumpsuit. Calfa and O'Bannon give some subtle clues about Ernie's past and the character's back-story is one of the film's details that is only discernable after repeated viewings. Typically, the old guys would have given the punks some flak about their appearance and the punks would have sassed back but, refreshingly, everybody gets along and works together for survival's sake. Spider and Burt in particular make a good team and almost save the day. It's possible that one of the film's subtexts is the fact that the World War II generation and the '80s upstart punk kids can work together for a better future and that the real enemy is the establishment.

Since it's an incredible punk rock movie, you would only assume *The Return of the Living Dead* would have an incredible punk rock soundtrack, but that's not exactly the case. While the album is a lot of fun and showcases some truly great bands, it doesn't have the same coherency as, say, 1984's *Repo Man* soundtrack, and much of the music here just ain't punk. 1985 was a screwy year for rock 'n' roll as most of the prime movers had either fizzled or sold out and many underground favorites were on their last legs. Consequently, it's no surprise that the album is a mixed bag.

As with *Repo Man*, the soundtrack for *The Return of the Living Dead* was used as an effective marketing device to attract punks and rockers to the cinema. Unlike *Repo Man*, the artists were mostly selected from a single record label. Originally an indie, Enigma Records got to be a pretty big deal and from 1986 on, they were associated with Capitol Records. Despite having an incredible roster of artists (from The Wipers to Stryper) the label never really had much in the way of consistent personality and these qualities are reflected in the soundtrack. Assembled by Budd Carr, *The Return of the Living Dead* album is, in many ways, like an early version of *The Enigma Variations*, which were a series of aimless compilations. The original LP had the words "You've got to let me eat your brains" written along the spine and the album came with an insert advertising a *The Return of the Living Dead* T-shirt. There was also a picture disc sold that mixed some of the film's dialogue between songs. This version featured a zombie on one side and a topless Trash on the other.

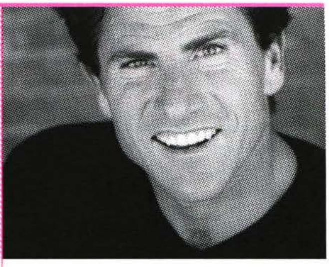
Kicking things off is "Surfin' Dead," a tough tune written by The Cramps especially for the movie, and played in the background during a zombie attack. The album then makes a jostling segue into 45 Grave's "Partytime." Don't get me wrong, this is a great song, but its glam/punk/metal sound is a bit of a shock after hearing some twisted psychobilly. "Partytime" is memorably used in both the film and its trailer when an emaciated corpse pops out of the ground, looks at the camera and opens its mouth ("Do you wanna party? It's Partytime!"). This is the special "zombie version" of the song, and the regular version shows up in the 1984 T&A comedy *Hardbodies*. Texas acid casualty Roky Erickson ends Side A with a tune called "Burn The Flames" that he composed specifically for the scene when Frank kills himself in the crematorium.

The final two tracks on the flipside are by a bland group called SSQ, who play unremarkable synthesizer-based dance pop. Their song *Tonight (We'll Make Love till We Die)* is played during Trash's striptease (so you probably didn't even notice it) and they have another song called *Trash's Theme* that is a forgettable instrumental tune. The most interesting bit of SSQ trivia is that the singer went on to become Stacey Q, a Madonnawannabe who had a huge pop hit with the stupid track "Two of Hearts." As SSQ, they released one album (on Enigma of course), appeared on two volumes of *The Enigma Variations* and also contributed music to the *Hardbodies* soundtrack. There are a couple of songs that appear in the film that are not on the soundtrack including "Young, Fast, Iranians" by The F.U.s and the nifty instrumental Trioxin Theme.

The film was originally released in Germany as *Verdammt, die Zombies Kommen*, which translates to "Oh Crap, the Zombies Are Coming!" The movie's legacy has since been tarnished by five increasingly diluted sequels so, along with a special edition CD, there should be a deluxe edition DVD that includes the original cut of the film, the TV movie version, and some sort of gallery including all the punk-themed promotional materials. The latest DVD ditched the movie's incredible poster art in favor of a generic image of zombie Freddy and some random ghouls. The vastly superior original cover featured a painting of three green zombie punks. One is spraypainting the film's title on a gravestone, another has frizzed hair and the third looks like a one-eyed skeleton with a mohawk. It's party time!! (*SH*)

JOHN PHILBIN

"Chuck" – *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*



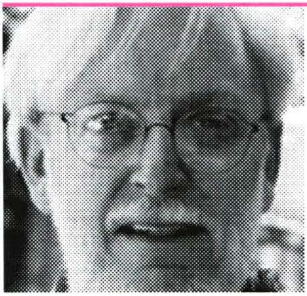
JP: There was an actor's strike brewing at that time in Los Angeles. I'd only done a couple of movies so far when I showed up for the audition, and Dan O'Bannon had us do improv in a hot backyard in the valley. He was just pairing up actors and switching us around until they'd made up their group of punks. After the third day of that, they called and offered me the part.

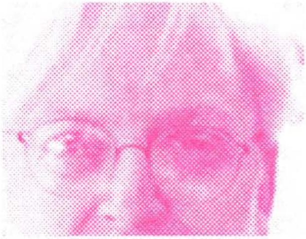
I had already been kind of a new wave punk kid in LA before I even started acting. I used to dress and cut my hair pretty funny before I went out to the clubs. But I wasn't much like the Chuck character. Honestly, I still don't know what Chuck is all about, even to this day. He's kinda the weak link in the group, to tell you the truth. The guy's a little confused. I mean, he wants to be the hero, but he can't get it together.

I don't know why they chose me for the part. Maybe it was my nose, my goofy haircut, my teeth...he's just this nerdy new wave guy. I didn't know anyone else on the set. I didn't know what the tone was going to be, if we were playing it straight or going for big, broad comedy. The scene where we're in the cemetery and blasting punk, I thought, "This movie is going to be HEAVY. It's going to be dramatic!" [Laughs.] I had no idea how it would turn out until I saw it.

The first movie I did was *Children of the Corn*. I was a horror fan from way back when I was a little kid. In third grade, I'd get my hands on the *TV Guide* each week and circle every movie that said "horror" after it. *Frankenstein, The Invisible Man*, stuff like that. I'd buy the plastic models of those characters and I'd chop their heads off. I went from that to surfing, then nightclubbing and into acting. The easiest thing to get into was horror movies. Now you can be really well established as an actor and still do a horror movie. But then, it didn't cost much money, you didn't need a star and you could make one. The genre would support itself. Some actors with great careers started in horror and won't do those films anymore, which is too bad.

Why does anyone want to talk to me about this movie now? They sure didn't want to when it came out in theaters.





DAN O'BANNON

Director – *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*

DAM: What sparked the original story?

DO: I wanted something that was different enough from Romero's film so that they wouldn't be confused with each other.

Why decide to go with punk as a theme?

I was tired of the clean suburban teenagers that usually appeared in horror films.

While writing, did you desire to direct?

No, I wrote this for Tobe Hooper to direct, but Tobe left the project to direct another film, at which point I was asked if I'd like to direct it.

Were you personally interested in punks or did they just seem like fun characters to use?

Both. I loved the punk culture and I wanted colorful characters as well.

JEWEL SHEPARD

"Casey" – *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*

JS: How I got the role was this: Dan O'Bannon saw me in a strip joint and said, "Hey, I can put you in the movies." He explained what the movie was; it was only in script stages then. He didn't even know he was going to direct it yet. Tobe Hooper was set to do it, but he ended up taking off to make *Lifeforce*. So when it came time to cast the movie, I was offered the character Trash. The naked girl. But I figured that I'd already done enough naked girl stuff. I asked if I could audition for someone that's a little less glamorous, or something where I wouldn't be showing my body. He described another character, which I ended up with after auditioning for it. I even got to name her Casey. Linnea Quigley got the role of Trash. From the time of casting to when we actually started shooting was almost a year, because the people behind the original *Dead* films had to be bought off. I did *Zapped!* and *Hollywood Hot Tubs* in the meantime. Stuff like that didn't pay at that time either, so I'd be shooting during the day for like four or five hundred dollars a week, and then going back to my real job which was stripping. So when *Return* happened, I was just glad for another movie. I didn't realize it was anything special. I just memorized my lines and showed up.

Linnea and I knew each other previously. We'd done shoots for some of the same magazines, and would see each other on those sets. I knew there were only a certain number of women that could take off their clothes like that and handle it on camera, so of course it was someone that I knew personally who got the role of Trash. I thanked God I didn't take the part every day when I showed up at the shoot and they were putting the prosthetic on her thingy down there, with all the extra hell she was going through with the rain and the mud. Where it was shot in Orange Grove is now a bunch of condos and townhomes.

I'm not a horror fan at all. I don't understand the appeal. There's enough horrible stuff in the world without making up more. That's the responsible outlook from the girl who takes off her clothes in every other movie she's in [laughs].

I didn't know who these bands were on the soundtrack. I guess they were successful at that time. The only people I knew at all from that scene were Lux Interior and Ivy Rorschach of The Cramps. I wasn't a punk fan. I guess Sid Vicious was in or whatever, but I couldn't care less. I didn't even like the music. I'm just a fan of The Paycheck.

NO WAVE
WHY BOT
DIE

A RETURN TO SALEM'S LOT

Dir. Larry Cohen / 1987

Night creatures rule the American Northeast.

A truckload of gothed-up glampunks cruise the streets of Salem's Lot, a Maine town "so small that it's not on most maps." They're pulled over by the local constable, who drags the teenagers out of the vehicle so they can be more conveniently devoured by elderly vampires. One girl escapes, pursued by every citizen in town, but is rescued by unwitting visiting anthropologist Joe (Cohen film regular Michael Moriarty). When he takes her to Judge Axel's house for sanctuary, the old man and his family drag her away to be drained of blood. Axel calmly explains the history of the town's undead populace in the hopes that their ancient race can be documented—and eventually accepted—by mankind. As Joe and his son Jeremy struggle with the idea of allying with the creatures, curmudgeonly Nazi hunter Van Meer arrives on the scene, hilariously played by venerable filmmaker Samuel Fuller. Jeremy is stolen away by the monsters, leaving Joe and Van Meer to wipe out the vampire colony and rescue the boy.

This was the first time in history where a TV movie spawned a theatrically-released sequel. This R-rated installment is more vicious and entertaining than the original, with incredible standout performances from Fuller and Moriarty. The latter also starred in Cohen's *It's Alive III: Island of the Alive*, which was filmed back-to-back with this picture, featuring a lesser script but a heavier dose of off-the-mark punks. *A Return to Salem's Lot* was co-written by the director with the talented James Dixon, who plays the town constable as well as a police officer in no less than twelve other Cohen films. (*ZC*)

RETURN TO WATERLOO

Dir. Ray Davies / 1985

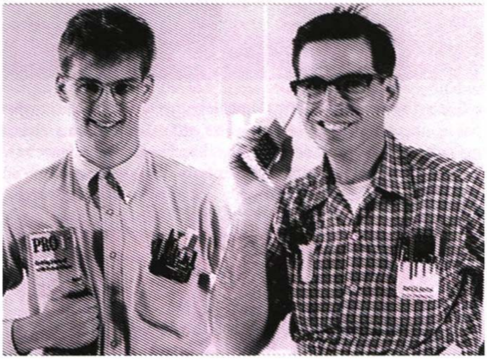
An unexpectedly grim art pastiche/extended music video from the frontman of rockers The Kinks.

As a young woman wanders a London subway station, a couple underfed GBH punks pass her in the darkness. She's slyly trailed by a listless businessman, who indulges in pulsing false visions of naked strangers and leering punk thugs. As the film progresses, it increasingly devolves into choreographed rock videos, possibly to ape *Pink Floyd: The Wall*. On the train ride home, the businessman's travel car is boarded by a trio of the aforementioned young knockabouts, complete with a boombox blaring Davies' attempt at an anti-corporate punk anthem. One of the teens is a fresh-faced Tim Roth, who mouths lyrics like "You Sold Me Out" while mugging for the camera. These troublemakers spend the duration of the ride lazily intimidating the other passengers; the female member of their group even stoops to play a game of cat-and-mouse with the film's middle-aged lead. This all culminates in an incredibly awkward fantasized lip-synch battle between the kids and the elderly riders, which itself degenerates into a pretentious, quasi-supernatural bloodwar. Davies provided all music as well as a useless cameo as a busking panhandler. I'm not sure *why* this symbolism-laden vanity project exists, but it most certainly *does* because I'm now 90 minutes older with nothing to show for it. (*ZC*)

REVENGE OF THE NERDS

Dir. Jeff Kanew / 1984

The nerd fraternity of Lamdba Lambda Lambda battle against the evil Alpha Beta jocks.



Easily the best of the *Animal House* rip-offs. Robert Carradine, Anthony Edwards and Curtis "Booger" Armstrong play over-the-top characters that, in the hands of amateurs, wouldn't come off as sympathetic as they do here. This film has everything one would expect from a solid frat comedy: panty raids, full frontal nudity, beer guzzling and pot smoking, but all presented in a way that marked the dawn of a brave new era of geek appreciation.

At the school talent show, the nerds bust out a new wave rap jam with Carradine and Edwards wearing yellow Devo jumpsuits. Clean-cut nerd Poindexter (Timothy Busfield) turns punk for the performance, spiking his hair and wearing studs while playing an electric violin. This film has a shocking amount of heart, which is probably why it's still legendary. The rousing end speech at the pep rally is the most moving scene in any wacky comedy ever. This film lit the eternal flame of nerd pride, and will always remain a beacon for the near-sighted, bookish and sexless. (*BC*)

REVENGE OF THE NERDS II: NERDS IN PARADISE

Dir. Joe Roth / 1987

Like the first one, but in a tropical setting.

Some people mistakenly think that this movie isn't any good and avoid it altogether. Yes, it does seem like Anthony Edwards wanted nothing to do with this movie. He's at the beginning and the end, taking up a total of under five minutes on screen. But this film has some truly great moments. Booger walks around in a "Who Farted?" shirt and is trained in the mystic ways of belching by an

old Asian man named Snotty (James Hong). Ogre takes the longest pee in cinematic history. All members of Tri-Lambda do a wicked rap performance. Devo does the soundtrack. Poindexter is secretly a punk; yet again, he shapes his hair into liberty spikes when shit hits the fan. (*BC*)

REVENGE OF THE NERDS III: THE NEXT GENERATION

Dir. Roland Mesa / 1992

The hero of the first two Nerds installments experiences a brush with dignity.

The first of two unapologetically flawed made-for-TV sequels to the films that gave false confidence to the intelligent. Lewis Skolnick (Robert Carradine) has shed his patent nerd appearance and lifestyle in exchange for silk shirts and a ponytail. Enter his nephew and an assortment of new Lambda Lambda Lambda pledges. There's the spastic female geologist; the obese British kid in a kilt; the Korean Elvis impersonator; and several other characters calculated to represent completely nonexistent stereotypes. At one point, two of these budding eggheads disguise themselves in discount day-glo Halloween punk wigs and pose as hairstylists to shave "NERDS RULE" onto the back of a couple of jock craniums. Look for TV's flash-in-the-pan incendiary ranter Morton Downey Jr. painted like a candy cane, as well as the triumphant return of Booger. (*ZC*)

REVENGE OF THE NERDS IV: NERDS IN LOVE

Dir. Steve Zacharias / 1994

Confirmed bachelor Booger finds true love.

In the final insult to the flawless first installment, the least dignified of the ongoing cast assemble for Booger's marriage to Jeanie (Corinne Bohrer). Lewis, Lamar, Takashi and Ogre cash a smaller-than-ever check, appearing alongside the crushingly irritating rookie nerds from *Part III*. This made-for-TV conclusion suffers from every possible anti-comedy infection: foley belches, G-rated sex gags and the ever-popular sitcom convention of the wrong-place-wrong-time childbirth. Said baby pops out during the wedding ceremony, where the towering Ogre gets formal by styling his curly mop into a jutting mohawk and donning a fuchsia-and-black ensemble. This film was intended to serve as a springboard for an ongoing Booger TV series. (*ZC*)

JEFF KANEW

Director – *REVENGE OF THE NERDS*

JK: *Revenge of the Nerds* didn't start with me. There was a producer and a team of writers before I ever even got involved. I was a director-for-hire on that one. Someone had read an article on nerds in a magazine. Nerds hadn't become a phenomenon or an accepted factor in society yet, so they decided that it'd be a good idea for a movie. I had to audition to get the job because my previous two films weren't the least bit funny. They didn't know I had a sense of humor. I did a little three-hour tapdance and I got the job.

Punk and new wave weren't a part of any of our thinking. It was more about The Geeks vs. The Jocks. But once I got involved, we started hiring actors, thinking about what they would wear, how they would decorate their house and, of course, what music would they listen to. It became clear to me that they would listen to Devo. So for their music scene, we dressed them up in the yellow outfits. Poindexter does his hair up in spikes for his violin solo, which was part of these guys doing this crazy presentation and both representing and being the antithesis of what nerds were. Really, the most punk of all the nerds would have to be Booger. The other nerds were just putting on a show, but he had the mentality of a rebellious, alienated guy.

St. Booger
GIMME HEAD TILL I'M DEAD

RIDERS OF THE STORM

aka THE AMERICAN WAY

Dir. Maurice Phillips / 1986

A group of Vietnam vets run a pirate television station out of an old B-29 bomber.

The mobile SMTV station headquarters are governed by ageing hippie The Captain (Dennis Hopper) as they fly around a near-future America spreading their subversive anti-establishment message. Tesla (Michael J. Pollard) is the station's engineer and uses broadcasting equipment left over from the war when their unit was responsible for disseminating anti-North Vietnamese propaganda in Southeast Asia. The Captain says that if they weren't TV pirates they'd be "climbing the walls and blowing away hamburger joints in a week." But the crew is already a bunch of shell-shocked maniacs, including one guy who repeatedly plays solo Russian roulette. At one point he fires a pistol at his head with bullets in five of its chambers but, to his dismay, he survives. Their TV station mostly plays surreal video collages, using an early MTV video aesthetic to get their political messages across. These are some of the most enjoyable parts of the film and are well-executed by director Phillips, who started out in music videos and also worked on the inimitable *Max Headroom*. The station's biggest fans are a gang of street punks on roller skates who listen to the station on an enormous boombox, which they carry around despite the fact that it's the size of a couch. When accused of inciting violence by playing fast, loud and angry music, the SMTV crew defend themselves by arguing that "the music doesn't encourage violence…it encourages aggressiveness, and that's the difference. And you want to know something else? You've gotta have aggressiveness to be a success. Because that's The American Way." (*TS*)

RIOT ON 42nd ST.

Dir. Tim Kincaid / 1987

Territorial violence unleashed in the darkest boroughs of the big city.

A cabbie drives through the heart of Manhattan, pointing out abundant evidence that "New York is the shithole of the world." One of his prime examples is a punk junkie couple nodding off against a lamppost. The female of the pair (Chris McNamee, also cast in Kincaid's *Mutant Hunt*) has a towering tri-color hair wedge that drapes all the way down to her studded jacket, and it's all she can do to keep her companion on his feet. The cab's passenger is Glen Barnes, an ex-con returning to the mean streets to open his dream nightclub. Unfortunately, the competition is deadly, graphically decapitating anyone who stands in their way. One of these headhunting thugs is a WWF-sized beefcake who clutches an issue of *Amputee Love Magazine* through one scene. This same crew takes the liberty of machine-gunning Glen's clientele (and father!), bursting open a full-scale business war that shines a light on the ugliest features of America's filthiest city. (*ZC*)

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Dir. PMRC / 1987

Please…for the love of God…protect the children…

Punk culture's dartboard target Tipper Gore firmly established the Parents Music Resource Center in 1985, and joined forces with the mysterious "Teen Vision Inc." to release this cautionary tape two years later. An endless warning scrolls before the program begins:

"This videotape has been designed for adults. Please review the contents before you share it with your children. We at the PMRC wish to alert you that the videotape you are about to see contains violent and sexually explicit material. The nature of this material caused us to form the PMRC. We apologize in advance for the offensive content but believe strongly that it is necessary that you see this to know what is available to your children. – The PMRC."

Finally, it starts…with a sequence of stills contrasting *Sesame Street* with punk and metal. A list of "musicians with positive messages" is shown, which includes Mr. Mister, Billy Joel, Dire Straights (their spelling, not mine), Bob Dylan and Smokey "Robison." This is immediately followed by a photo of David Lee Roth grinning blankly at a pair of bare breasts. Next up is a shot of then-closeted (but still terrifying to Bible-thumpers) Judas Priest frontman Rob Halford sticking his tongue in a beer bottle. Endless images of "rape, violence, sadomasochism and suicide" culminate in two full screen shots of Black Flag's *Family Man* LP and the first Suicidal Tendencies album. The assumedly-Christian narrator seems sweetly unable to make any distinction between hard rock and punk, but notes that all this "heavy metal" contains the following five elements (verbatim):

PARENTAL
ADVISORY

- AGGRESSIVE REBELLION
- ABUSE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
- GRAPHIC VIOLENCE
- FASCINATION WITH THE OCCULT
- SEXUALITY THAT IS GRAPHIC AND EXPLICIT

Impressively, non-major label acts like Venom and Kreator receive equal condemnation. Most surprising to see here are shock-punk luminaries The Mentors. The lyrics to their song "Golden Shower" are displayed onscreen:

"All through my excrements you shall roam.
Open your mouth and taste the foam.
Bend up and smell my anal vapor.
Your face is my toilet paper."

This leads into a raging dissertation regarding the so-called pornographic H.R. Giger poster "Penis Landscape" which, until the PMRC deemed it unsuitable in a publicized court case, came free with the Dead Kennedys' *Frankenchrist* LP. But the organization wasn't content to stop there; over the next several years, Gore's organization would continue to take great strides to insure the safety of America's stereos. (*ZC*)

ROAD LAWYERS AND OTHER BRIEFS

Dirs. Robert Rhine & various / 1990

A collection of short films including a post-apocalyptic parable about lawyers battling over coffee in a futuristic wasteland.

This compilation of comedy bits was masterminded by Rhine, the director and star of the title segment. As you can guess, his contribution is a one-joke *Road Warrior* parody about survivalist lawyers battling in a futuristic wasteland where, instead of gasoline, the precious fuel is coffee. Rhine himself stars as Mild Milt, a longhaired, Rolaids-popping lawyer who travels through society's ruins in an easy chair controlled by an Atari 2600 joystick. His main enemies are a quartet of punk baddies, including an ex-divorce attorney with a silver mohawk and animal hides. There's also a sniveling shirtless legal clerk with studded cross suspenders, white face makeup and a silver ponytail. His name is Jury and he's on a leash tended by Caffina, an S&M judge with a motorcycle jacket and bright red highlights through her frizzy black hair. I don't think the filmmakers were aiming for any sort of punk rock statement with these characters; they just look the way they do because Wez and the rest of the marauders in *The Road Warrior* looked like punks. None of the other shorts feature punks and none of them are funny so, as the kids say, fuck 'em. (*SH*)

THE ROAD WARRIOR

aka MAD MAX 2

Dir. George Miller / 1981

Renegade ex-police officer Max (Mel Gibson) continues his journey through the apocalyptic wasteland in search of food rations and gasoline. He unwillingly befriends a small group of refugees and, for promises of supplies and petrol, becomes their last hope for escape from crazed marauders.

This is the sequel to the Australian future revenge flick *Mad Max*, and as much as I like the original, *Road Warrior* walks all over it as well as most of the post-apocalyptic cheese that followed suit. I love me some of its countless Italian knockoffs, but damn. This is the ultimate.

In the future, people are mean. Roving gangs own the highways. Gas is getting ridiculous to come by, and when you do find some, you have to kill for it. Max befriends a goof in a gyrocopter who tells him of a small colony refining oil and pumping gas in the desert. Day in and day out, the oil-bearing peaceniks are attacked by motor thugs under the control of one "Lord Humungus" (a large mask-n-loincloth ape who shouts orders from his overblown supercharged lawnmower) and his psychotic henchman, Wez (Vernon Wells).

Max rolls in hoping to get some supplies in exchange for helping out the wounded during a raid. The Commune wants to get their oil drums out of the desert and off to an island somewhere near the coast. Max helps them secure a truck big enough to haul the gasoline, but wants nothing to do with their trek. He's attacked on his way out and left for dead. Soon, he's back at the refinery in rough shape. A plan has been set in motion to go for the ocean, tractor-trailer and caravan in tow. Max will drive the big rig (think *The Gauntlet*) and the others will fight to protect it at any cost. What follows is a 20-minute wagon train ride through hell featuring more biker flips, car crack-ups and injured stuntmen than any film before or since. They blow'd stuff up real good.

A tidy montage of stock footage sets the plot before director Miller takes off full-throttle. The automotive mayhem and mohawked violence does not let up for the picture's entire running time. I mean, how can you slag a film that's two-thirds chase scenes? Growing up, this is what I hoped the future would be like: custom-fitted cars with mounted weaponry; dune buggies filled with angry pro wrestlers; crossbow battles on motorcycles. Retrofitted trash and punk aesthetic abound. Dialogue is minimal; most of the characters merely grunt, squeal, fuck and/or kill. The fetishistic look of the leather-daddy cops and post-punk apocalypse operas just add to the absurdity of the film's ragtag future vision. The cherry that tops it all off is Vernon Wells as Wez, the over-the-top, scene-chewing, shrieking-like-a-Muppet, assless-pants-wearing, head-butting Wildman to End All Wildmen. His eye-bugging antics and psychobabble keeps your head reeling from scene to glorious scene. Quite possibly the greatest madman in cinema, the actor is an actual former S.A.S. Commando who made his career out this type of character, going so far as to show up in John Hughes' *Weird Science* to parody this very role. (*RF*)

ROADIE

Dir. Alan Rudolph / 1980

A truck-driving Texan becomes the world's greatest roadie.

Roadie has little regard for demographics, niches or any general audience, its strength lying in its complete disregard for orthodox gags. Thus, this surreal meta-comedy shares a distinct and rare sense of humor: the jokes are alienating and bizarre, beyond test marketing or branding. The plot keeps it simple: Meat Loaf plays truck driver Travis W. Redfish, a good ol' boy who falls madly in love with Lola Bouillabaisse, a bubble-headed groupie. He follows her into parts unknown and experiences rock 'n' roll on the road, becoming the most desirable über-roadie of all time.

Lola is on a quest to be bedded by none other than Alice Cooper, whom she describes as "the first punk... sick and depraved and unChristian." Cooper shows up later on wearing a "Disco Sucks" button. Meanwhile, she's the carrot on the stick to Travis' salivating donkey. Along the road, the adventures are fun-lovin' and breezily wacky. Travis can fix anything, anywhere, anytime, and lives by his father's adage: "Everything works if you let it." This quote lends itself well to the filmmaking, as the swirling gumbo of nutty casting, overacting and ridiculous scenarios propel the film to mythic heights. The film is hilarious. Art Carney is the cantankerous old coot of a father who loves TV, Don Cornelius (the calm in the storm of frothing actors) is the tour promoter who will "rape your career" if you cross him, and Blondie (Debbie Harry, natch) is a competing love interest to Lola. Later, Blondie and the band perform a spitfire new wave version of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire." The circumstances leading up to this concert are typically off-the-wall; the authorities shut down the show's power in order to conserve energy, so Travis has all available hands shovel cow pies into a huge stinking pile, and Blondie plays juiced by a shit-powered generator. The absurdity continues when, following the show, a midget rock band ("Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs") shows up and engages in a food/bar fight with Blondie at a tire salesman convention.

A notable punk scene: at LA club The Whisky, Travis accidentally uses the headlining band's cocaine—which is hidden in a detergent box—to wash his clothes, and when they refuse to play without blow, he strong-arms the band into scampering onto the stage. The group, in full mime makeup, kicks out some raw yet melodious new wave as Travis grabs the mic and has a rock 'n' roll argument with Lola, who's sulking in the balcony. Also at the gig, there's a dude pogoing in a Ramones T-shirt and various poseurs gussied up in rouge like Rue McClanahan from *The Golden Girls*. (*SC*)

ROADKILL

Dir. Bruce McDonald / 1989

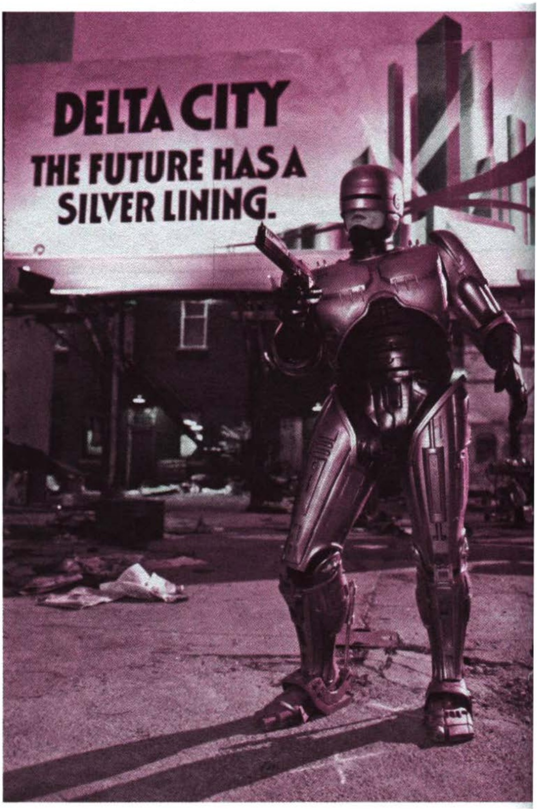
A blasé musical manhunt through the Canadian wilds.

Though the entire movie focuses on the independent music scene, this black-and-white art film is about as punk as a Thanksgiving Day sale at The Gap. Ramona (Valerie Buhagiar) is forced by her megalomaniacal rock promoter boss to hunt down errant band The Children of Paradise, cancel their shipwrecked tour and drag them back to the city. Along the way, she has several not-so-noteworthy experiences, including learning to drive, giving a mute artist a haircut and making out with a 15-year-old. A brutal chore to watch, but *Roadkill's* punk content is legitimate in the form of a two-minute Joey Ramone cameo, mangling dialogue in his trademarked mutated East Side NYC accent. Beyond the towering rock legend, all the other quasi-punks in the film look like they're desperately trying to meet the dress code for the unemployment office. (*ZC*)

ROBOCOP

Dir. Paul Verhoeven / 1987

Science transforms a murdered officer
into the ultimate crimefighting machine.


DELTA CITY
THE FUTURE HAS A SILVER LINING.

Paul Verhoeven is one efficient son of a bitch. His films are largely free from any pretension, subtext or meaning beyond total visceral entertainment. I heap accolades on this sleaze merchant; he could easily inject annoying political or social statements into his hedonistic bloodbaths, but instead takes the road straight to the pleasure center of the brain. When Verhoeven does address socio-political issues as he does in *RoboCop*, it's in a manner so uncomplicated and clean that it doesn't slow detract from his films' carnage.

In the not-so-distant future, Detroit is a morass of ultraviolent slime and corruption. Monolithic corporation OCP runs the police, and effective enforcement is dictated by its profit margins. Dick Jones (Ronny Cox) and Bob Morton (Miguel Ferrer) are competing to deliver automated police officers, Jones with his hulking, inhuman ED 209 and Morton with his cyborg design RoboCop. After ED 209 mistakenly makes mincemeat out of a corporate employee, Morton gets the green light on the RoboCop project. As luck would have it, Alex Murphy (Peter Weller)—a new transfer to the rough-and-tumble south precinct—is sadistically tortured and murdered by a gang of malevolent one-dimensional goons, who cackle with glee as they cut Murphy to ribbons. His mangled corpse is methodically transformed into RoboCop in a great POV montage. The violence soon comes at a surplus as RoboCop cleans up the streets in multiple sequences of top-notch '80s depravity.

OCP wants the streets clean in order to construct the gleaming Delta City, a smooth corporate urban dream with no rough edges. Their lapdog RoboCop is a good boy at first, but complications arise as memories of his past life start to seep in around the cracks. However, there is absolutely zero humanity peeking through the cracks of the film itself. Every character explains their motives and pertinent plot points explicitly in enunciated declarative sentences. Verhoeven's setup and execution of scenes is merciless; no romantic subplots, no comic relief, just pure autocratic action, as it should be. During RoboCop's inaugural visit to the streets, he confronts a couple of punk would-be rapists. Or is that would-be punk rapists? Hard to say. One of them is definitely a screen punk, with his bleached blond hair, leather vest and the classic denim-pants-and-boots combo. But his cohort looks like someone who would work at a carwash in an erotic thriller. Regardless, as the creeps chase down their feminine prey on a barren urban street, we see a huge billboard advertising Delta City at the top of the frame. Nice juxtaposition. *RoboCop* illustrates—in broad bloody strokes—that the sickness of Detroit doesn't stop at street level. We're shown a politician who holes himself up in city hall with the Mayor as a hostage. It's safe to say every aspect of the city has been infected by crime and madness.

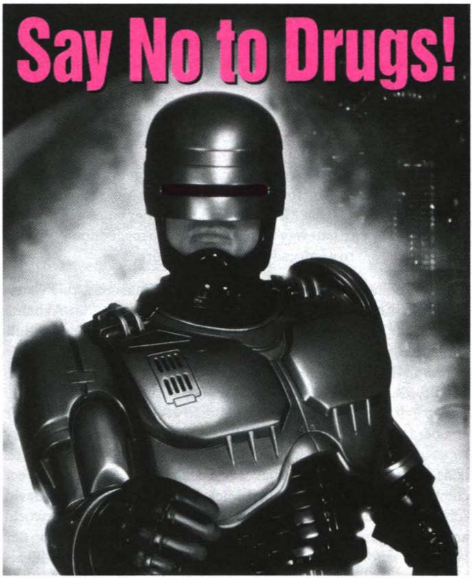
RoboCop's technological prowess is eventually overtaken by Murphy's memories, and he begins to methodically hunt down his murderers. As he makes his way through a nightclub to collar one of the scumbags, we're made aware that this establishment is in no way reputable as it is wall to wall with ambient punks, the type inserted in a scene to telegraph the unwholesomeness of a given environment. Bobbing liberty spikes, a blond flattop and plenty of leather fills the screen. Of course, no one and nothing, excepting a robotic police officer, is wholesome or redeemable in this entire film. The rotting urban filthscapes and refreshingly organic special effects slobber a nice layer of grime over the proceedings. *RoboCop* delivers in that respect; it hits all the blood-soaked marks any sane person could want from an action movie, with none of the distracting clichés of flimsy Hollywood action films that purport to be "meaningful." Instead, *RoboCop* has the courage to be straightforward in its misanthropic immorality. (*SC*)

ROBOCOP 2

Dir. Irvin Kershner / 1990

America's most beloved cybernetic law enforcer returns to destroy designer drug Nuke and its purveyors.

The first movie's over... character development is out of the way... let's *RAGE!!!* A massive police strike has taken future Detroit by the throat, allowing criminals to rampage unabated. Only a handful of officers remain to take on the seemingly-endless cavalcade of looters and rapists. Luckily, one of these die-hard troopers is RoboCop. The greatest threat to new Detroit stems from crimelord Cain (Tom Noonan), a conscience-free schizoid who is the primary dealer of Nuke, the most addictive injectable drug in history. His sidekick is a foulmouthed, murderous 10-year-old with designs on taking the narcotics market for himself. And that's not the only junior overachiever on display; one scene has an entire little league baseball team assaulting a storeowner for cash and jewels. Local robotics corporations rush to create more bionic lawmakers, but their prototypes are monumental failures; most notably the version who steps shrieking out on the test floor and tears off his own head. It's scenes like this that make this entry my favorite in the series, though I'm often told I'm wrong. But if loving *RoboCop 2* is a crime, then shoot me in the face. There's so much to like here: Noonan's seething performance, the relentlessly brutal violence, an absolutely suicidal stunt in which a retiree-age bartender gets pulled under the wheels of an armored truck and... punks! In the heart of the fallen city, a mohawked Nuke junkie juices up beside a flaming trashcan. Later, some spiked nuts in a video arcade (also Nukeheads, naturally) watch RoboCop smash a corrupt officer's chubby face through the glass screen of the Bad Dudes game.


Say No to Drugs!

This was the first screenplay by comics icon Frank Miller, and is miles beyond the tepid CGI output he's been reduced to in recent years. I'm not sure whether he can be credited for scribing the special public service announcement included in the initial release of the VHS version, in which RoboCop and his stalwart partner Lewis (Nancy Allen) stand in front of The Boys & Girls Club of Detroit. Our hero stands among several urban children, staring forward with grim computerized austerity.

LEWIS: What's buggin' you, Murphy?
RoboCop: Drugs. Drugs bug me.

(*ZC*)

ROBOCOP 3

Dir Fred Dekker / 1993

Evil corporate developers try to evict the innocent from their homes, but everybody's favorite metal cop lends a helping robo-hand.

Punks and kinda-punks floated in and out of the first two films, but appear here in full force as evil gang The Splatterpunks. These nogoodniks mark their territory with graffiti images of a mohawked skull. In one scene, cops get stranded in this no-rules zone and the wailing, laughing punkers get their hassle on. Eventually, corrupt officers team up with the punks to raise hell. The best special effects in this film are these punks' towering haircuts. In one hilarious moment, we see a dude with one of these huge green hair-fins unsuccessfully attempt to wear a cop helmet. For some reason, the nonstop fun and action of this film isn't enough for the crybabies that revel in misdirected movie hatred. Having been made in the early '90s without the original star and with a PG-13 rating, this film seemed destined to be a big-time letdown. To some, having a flying RoboCop battle a ninja and an army of punks might seem ridiculous…scratch that, it might seem really, really lame. But with über-talented filmmaker Mr. Fred Dekker at the helm, things never get too silly or out of hand, much in the same way he brilliantly kept the kids vs. classic-monsters plot of *The Monster Squad* on the straight-and-true. (*BC*)

ROCK & RULE

Dir. Clive A. Smith / 1983

Angel, the singer of a small-town rock band, gets a chance for the big time singing for superstar musician Mok. What she doesn't know is that Mok has plans to use her voice as a key to open a gateway to hell, bringing Armageddon to an already desecrated future….

A late-nite fave among cable channels in the mid-'80s, this Canadian feature had next to no theatrical or video distribution. A shame because it's leaps and bounds better than the more popular adult animated feature of the time, *Heavy Metal*.

Set in the *Blade Runner*-esque cityscapes overrun by mutant rat-people, *R&R* tells the tale of a rock group (with songs performed by Cheap Trick and Debbie Harry) trying to get their foot in the door at a bar in Ohm Town, U.S.A. Little do they know that a legendary super-rocker is out talent-scouting for his next big "show" which consists of demon portals, snakes and dead babies. Mok, the perfect composite sketch of a junkified Mick Jagger, Lou Reed and David Johansen, needs a certain voice to serve as a key to the netherworld and small-town singer Angel seems to have it. Mok tries to woo her away, but bandmates Dizzy, Stretch and Omar don't share his ideals and try to get her to stay behind. Mok pulls some spooky voodoo brainwash bullshit and gets her to come along to Nuke York (get it?) to destroy the world. The band tries to pull her back to her senses to no avail. Fun cartoon carnage ensues…and a rainbow.

Each band character is obviously based on the artist that performs them. The animation is quite good for the time (unlike *Heavy Metal*) and the background paintings look like Syd Mead art. You actually feel for some of the characters, especially Mok's sky palace guards Zip, Toad and Stretch who could carry this feature on their own.

Just stretching past the hour mark, the story chugs along nicely, even if some of the "future" comes across dated (roller disco to Earth Wind & Fire? C'mon). Lot's of weird new wavers, goths and punks throughout the club scenes keep it entertaining as well, especially a pill-popping pusher man ("I've got uppers and downers, inners and outers…") Tons of mondo safety pins and skinny-tie types. I suppose Debbie Harry gives the flick some punk appeal as well, although her songs are new wave ballads. The Cheap Trick songs are by far the hardest tracks they've ever recorded, falling somewhere between the snotty '70s Brit-punk and AC/DC blown-out bar rock. Mok's music is performed by both Iggy Pop and Lou Reed. Reed's contribution feels like a last-minute quickie, but it was the early '80s and his cheese-puff tracks were in high fashion. (*RF*)

ROCK AND THE ALIEN

aka SPACE FREAKS FROM PLANET MUTOID

Dir. Dionysius Zervos / 1988

A Greek crooner saves the world from a vague galactic threat.

An uncommonly rowdy bar show is packed with a confusing assortment of weekend glam castoffs and powder-puff punks. They scream, writhe and riot while slim balladeer Tyler (played by the writer/director but credited as Denis Zervos) sneers out a Richard Marx-inspired ditty with his band The People Eaters. A blue-walled female new waver with matching eyeshadow grins enthusiastically from the front row. Strangely, Tyler hates the crowd's enthusiasm: "It's no fun anymore when people smash into each other on the dance floor!" Still, the animalistic fans keep coming; during the group's performance of self-referential theme "Rockin' People Eaters," a corpse-painted goth punk shakes his thing along with the rest of the deluded audience.

Tyler eventually has sex with an interstellar albino named Laser who grants him superpowers so he can battle a parasitic alien monster. One of his newfound abilities allows him to sing a song about world peace, which lowers the crime rate in New York City by 80%. His influence increases despite a lack of stage presence and the fact that his singing voice sounds like the vicious rasping of an angry gym coach. He eventually uses this same ear-torturing death rattle to rescue the world from nuclear devastation. The film's clunky humanitarianism paints Zervos as a man of intense personal political beliefs, additionally evidenced by the large "VOTE FOR DUKAKIS" emblazoned across the screen during the end credits. His stillborn vanity project was later sold to gutter-chasers Troma, who reedited *Rock and the Alien* and released it under the dumbed-down title above to appeal to their mouth-breathing target demographic. (*ZC*)

ROCK HOUSE

aka DEADLY ADDICTION

Dir. Jack Vacek / 1988

A rebel LAPD officer unleashes his unshaven rage on the drug empire.

If I say "straight-to-video late '80s action movie set in Los Angeles," you think fast cars, fast food, and fast-forward button.

These films are obligated to feature knife-wielding pimps, automotive destruction, drug-slinging 10-year-olds and a few carefree, spiky-haired sidewalk punk extras to establish that Hard Streets ambience. *Rock House* nails so many of these clichés that it achieves action satire, running down the renegade cop checklist with a pen in each fist: every villain has slicked-back hair and a white suit; every police captain is busting a blood vessel; every woman has an all-bikini wardrobe.

But, not content to rest on its formulaic laurels, the film devises innovative new stabs at policeman-over-the-edge insanity. A bloodthirsty hit man runs through the Hollywood streets in a neon goblin mask. Two men in their underwear bark at a prostitute in an alley. Shirtless, tattooed metal dudes get a car driven into their living room. A devil head on a door spits out vials of cocaine. A full-sized plastic horse wears a sun hat. Punks with foot-tall hairstyles go wide-eyed when a chainsaw pops through the wall. A Colombian drug lord (what else?) shares his thoughts on the automotive industry: "Rolls Royce? Ca-ca!!!"

The man who wrote, produced, directed and starred in this underappreciated wreck is Jack Vacek, a sort of lankier Chuck Norris with the easy charm of a guy your mom brings home on a Saturday night. Vacek had performed previously in motor-driven actioners *The Junkman* and *Deadline Auto Theft*, but left to his own creative devices, he's a grab-bag of genuinely entertaining man-pulp wildness. Unfortunately, *Rock House* failed to cement his place in the era's hardboiled low budget pantheon, and it would be his final work on either side of the camera. (ZC)

ROCK IN REYKJAVIK

Dir. Fridrik Thor Fridriksson / 1982

The sound of the Nordic underground!

Fridriksson, one of Iceland's premier film directors, started his career with this energetic, fast-paced documentary, a kind of cross between *Urgh! A Music War* and *The Decline of Western Civilization* set in the early '80s music scene of Iceland's capital city. If this sounds like fodder for only a cute little short film, think again. Reykjavik had a modest population of 85,000 at the time, but this film is evidence that, in the exciting wake of the continental Europunk revolution, practically every musician in the city tried their hand in the genre and produced uniformly fantastic results. This is simply one of the coolest films listed in this book (and one of the rarest as well).

Fridriksson presents us with a wide-ranging slate of the island's post-punk sounds, from new wave to hardcore, glam to power pop and performance art, featuring almost 20 acts in all. Given the film's whirlwind pace and 90-minute running time, you'd think there wouldn't be much room for editorializing, but there's a surprising amount of political jibber-jabber flung about during the interview segments. Some of it is prime awesome heaviness; one older rocker sez, "I recommend everybody take as many drugs as they can and then they can decide if they want to continue" and, "The evil right-wingers could achieve their goals by simply hiring a dumb anarchist band and letting them sing 'Commies are stupid, the left's got no brain, we want anarchy.' " Much of it is garden-variety angst, and Fridriksson wisely lets the footage do the talking. This is not to say that the concerns of *RIR*'s onscreen participants aren't legitimate. They most certainly have a right to speak out on what would make their country a better place, but in the face of the era's more seriously burdensome locales (El Salvador, South Africa and Russia immediately come to mind), some of their purple political prose rings hollow.

Most entertaining on this front is the youngest band in the film, featuring a mohawked singer fresh enough to be in junior high but still spouting his displeasure with "our stupid government and a boring country that doesn't do anything for us." He continues, "Sometimes the bus drivers don't let us on the buses; one driver throws us out if we chew gum. We call him a Nazi, or Jesus. We are despised; these people are crazy and they shouldn't be allowed to live." With all the dour, hardened resignation of a veteran of life behind the Iron Curtain, he later tells of his seasoned escapades in the land of glue- and gasoline-sniffing. His youth pokes through in one of the most hilarious moments of the film, when, after gleefully attacking a guitar with a pickaxe in an onstage stunt, he cowers in surprise as the crowd hurls the broken pieces back at him.

Ultimately, this is all secondary to the terrific tunes. Everything here is wrapped up in a slick, effervescent, entertaining package and *Rock In Reykjavik* holds up under many repeated viewings. What the film imparts most successfully is what makes the best music docs so great: an easily communicated sense of unadulterated fun and a wish to have "been there."

Rock In Reykjavik was later followed in spirit by *Nurock In Reykjavik* (1994, chronicling the Icelandic indie rock scene), *Pop In Reykjavik* (1998) and *Electronica Reykjavik* (2008), each made by a director other than Fridriksson. Lest we forget, *RIR* is also of interest to all Björk fans, as she's captured at the age of 14, performing two numbers with one of her early bands, Tappi Tíkarrass (which roughly translates as "Cork The Bitch's Ass"!) (BB)

ROCK N' ROLL COWBOYS

Dir. Rob Stewart / 1987

A roadie for a heavy metal band wishes
he had their fame and success.

This movie is 100% unwatchable. There are lots of ideas in this film, but they all fall flat. Various rockers and punks get hypnotized and are made to hop around to country music. The final battle is fought with rock riffs...Yep. (BC)

ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL

Dir. Allan Arkush / 1979

The ultimate musical tribute to teenage rebellion.

Party machine Riff Randell (P.J. Soles) is an unstoppable force of recreation at Vince Lombardi High School. After causing a campus-wide dance party by blaring the Ramones through the PA system, she introduces herself to Principal Togar (Mary Woronov in her iconic role) as "Riff Randell: rock and roller." Before the opening credits have finished, she and bookish pal Kate (Dey Young) are already in detention and the stage is set for cinema's most inspiring teenage takeover.

Virginal whitebread washout Tom (Vincent Van Patten) is wild for Riff but doesn't stand a chance against her Joey Ramone fixation, even with the aid of the school's go-to man Eaglebauer (the great Clint Howard). Meanwhile, the nefariously uptight Togar discovers that exposing lab mice to rock music leads to them wearing leather jackets and tiny sunglasses. Further experimentation has her setting a "rock-o-meter" past Kansas and Peter Frampton levels and all the way up to Ramones decibels, causing the mouse to explode from sheer punk audio power.

It's this same power that drives Riff in her ultimate dream to write songs for the band. As the Ramones' impending concert date draws near, she cuts school to camp outside the venue. First in line, she passes time by thumbing through punk zines (from director Arkush's personal collection) and talking to her full-size cardboard standee of Joey. Tempers flare when the group's self-proclaimed #1 fan Angel Dust cuts ahead at the box office just before the boys roll into town in an open convertible with a GABBA-GABBA-HEY license plate. As they step out of the car, they perform their hit "I Just Want to Have Something to Do" with no need for amps or microphones, Joey singing into a fried chicken leg. The punks assembled outside the theater go wild, pogoing in a mad frenzy and slamming their dyed heads against the sidewalk. No one is more fixated than Riff, standing breathless in anticipation, clutching her hand-written sheet music to her chest.

Principal Togar shatters all fantasies when she confiscates the tickets to the show. Still hopeful, Riff daydreams about Joey serenading her in a personal bedroom performance. She strolls into her bathroom in a lovesick daze, pulls aside the shower curtain and reveals a soaking wet vision of Dee Dee playing bass. Her limitless dedication eventually earns her entry into the concert, where she waits among a roomful of fevered fans including nuns and a six-foot-tall mouse in a denim vest.

The band kicks in with "Blitzkrieg Bop" and the audience erupts with unsimulated vigor. Darby Crash of The Germs can be easily viewed in the front row, pumping his fist and chanting, "Hey ho...let's go!" Even new wave DJ Rodney Bingenheimer and bald, bearded science teacher Mr. McGree (Paul Bartel) are unable to hide their enthusiasm as the Ramones bring down the house with one perfectly executed number after another. After the set, Riff makes her way backstage to submit her songs, sharing pizza with her idols and having a long-awaited one-on-one conversation with mushmouthed Joey.

Her writing makes such an impression that the Ramones arrive on campus the following day, just in time for Togar's massive record burning. With their help, the students take over Vince Lombardi High, rename it "Rock 'n' Roll High School" and unleash a storm of food fights and co-ed shower antics. Leading the charge is Riff, tearing through the halls with the band at her side, empowering her fellow students and dropouts with rebellious electricity. The extremely explosive finale features the Ramones rendition of the Randell-penned title theme and an illegal amount of highly-charged dynamite.

Arkush dreamed up the basic idea for the film when he was in high school himself, and producer Corman had already gotten underway on a project to be called *Disco High*. Fortunately he was talked out of it, mainly because nobody could buy the concept of a building being blown up by disco music. The Ramones weren't initially slated to play the film's central band, and were brought in on the project after a meeting with Sire Records. Initial pitches had been Devo, Van Halen and others, but the Ramones won out due to their affordability and more reasonable likelihood to incite teenage riots.

Clint Howard's role as Eaglebauer was initially written for foremost screen nerd Eddie Deezen, but Howard brought a vivacious life of his own to the part. Joe Dante and *Airplane* co-creator David Zucker handled assistant director duties, Dante pulling extra shifts when Arkush was hospitalized after working himself to near-death. Vince Lombardi High was just a slightly redecorated Van Nuys High School, with additional shooting—and dynamiting--done at an abandoned Catholic school.

The exterior of fictional show venue The Rockatorium was actually the Maya Theater, a porn house that doubled as a porn film production stage. Those scenes' various punk extras weren't paid for their hours of long work. In fact, they paid admission to watch the Ramones play the same songs multiple times but were promised free records for their patience. Once filming was complete, Sire provided everyone with Carpenters albums. (ZC)

ALLAN ARKUSH

Director – *ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL*

DAM: How did you come to make the ultimate teen rebellion fantasy?

AA: I'd had the fantasy of blowing up my high school. I'd thought about this stuff for years and also had the thought of a band appearing at the school. At the time, the type of band would be like The Rolling Stones or The Yardbirds, because that was in the mid-to-late '60s. At some point in the '70s when I was working for Roger Corman, I wrote the idea up as a treatment and expanded on it. He'd been making high school movies, but they were all about the teachers, like *Summer School Teachers, Student Teachers* and things like that. I didn't want to do something like that. And then it turned into Roger letting me do a high school project but it was going to be called *High School Gym*, and that didn't turn out to be a viable idea. Finally he came to me and said, "This might work because *Grease* is a hit, *Saturday Night Fever* is a hit and so is *Thank God It's Friday*, so why don't you do one and we'll call it *Disco High*?" We hated the title, and we never wanted to do a disco movie. When Roger decided the script was ready and it was time to make the movie, we had a meeting with him. I told him that there were sociological and cultural differences between disco music and rock 'n' roll. Disco was the music of people who had money and went to nightclubs, and you can't have teenage rebellion with that. This had to be the music of anger and power. So he said, "OK, you can call it *Rock 'n' Roll High School*."

And how did the Ramones come into it?

I was a big record collector and I still am. I've got about 2500 LP's and four or five thousand CD's. I've always been following music, since the mid-'60s when I worked at the venue The Fillmore East. I always tried to keep up with what was current and find new interests. In the '70s, I was listening to all kinds of stuff, from when Springsteen first came out up through the Ramones, and all the other New York bands like Talking Heads. So when it was time to discuss who'd be the band in the movie—the original idea for the film had come from a song called "Heavy Metal Kids" that Todd Rundgren had written, and I liked his stuff a lot, but he wasn't interested in doing the movie. And I liked Cheap Trick and thought their lyrics were very witty. Plus I was looking for a band that would also be funny and have a sense of humor about their own music. We talked to Cheap Trick, and they were interested, and then we met with Warner Bros. for a big long meeting.

In the course of this, they mentioned the Ramones, whose album *Rocket to Russia* had already come out. I'd listened to the Ramones' first album, which I really liked, but when I got *Rocket to Russia*, I just loved it. I think that's one of the greatest rock 'n' roll albums of all time. As I remember, we went and spoke to their managers Danny Fields and Linda Stein that day, who were staying at a hotel in LA, just by coincidence. So we told them the story of *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, sitting in lawn chairs in the garden of the Bel-Air Hotel. And they just loved it. When we told them that the school blows up while the band plays, they jumped up and down, saying, "We wanna do this!" They were really excited about it. So I gathered material on the Ramones and Cheap Trick and showed it all to Roger. John Holstrom in *Punk Magazine* had done a story called "Mutant Monster Beach Party," which was like a picture comic book of Joey going to Rockaway Beach, I think with Deborah Harry. I showed Roger this imagery, and pictures from a concert of theirs I'd attended. We talked about how much each band was going to cost, and at that point I was already convinced that the Ramones were the way to go. They were the funniest choice also, and their music was so strong. That was how they got chosen.

How did they react to being in a feature?

On set...they were mostly bored [laughs]. It's kinda boring on a shoot! They wanted a TV set so we got 'em a little black-and-white one, and set 'em up in the teacher's lounge of the high school we were shooting them at, which was like an old Catholic school. They just sat and watched TV and ate pizza and that was it. They ended up playing a gig one weekend in San Bernadino, where they were on a double bill with Black Sabbath. That did not go well. It was an awful concert; they were great but Sabbath's fans hated them. Mostly they just hung out and did their thing. When it came time to do their songs, they gave it 100%. The two nights it took us to film the blowing up of the school, and at the concert, they were great. They also had this really dry sense of humor. I think it was Johnny who came up with putting the KICK ME sign on the back of Principal Togar. The scene where they arrive at the high school, Dee Dee stood and watched the dailies with me. He turned to me and said, "Wow. We look like we're from another planet." And that was exactly what I was going for!

How were things during their concert scene?

The performance at The Roxy was tough. That was a long day, playing the same six songs, one of which isn't in the movie. That was a difficult time with a lot of waiting for them. The whole film was shot in 20 days. I'd forgotten that we had the audience pay to be in the movie, because we couldn't afford all the extras for that shot. They did an announcement on KROQ or something, and people just wanted to come and be part of it. Every six hours we'd change the audience, and they'd be pretty pissed off after being there so long. But if you look around at those scenes, it's a pretty good collection of people that were around in the LA punk scene at that time. People still pop up from the shoot all the time. For people there, it was kind of a big deal, and something they could all congregate around. I know The Germs' Pat Smear is in the foreground in some of the shots, and Darby Crash was there too.

At that time, I'd seen The Germs, X, The Weirdos and the early version of The Go-Go's. I may have accidentally seen the second Go-Go's concert ever. It was in San Francisco at The Mabuhay Gardens, and I'd passed by a flyer for the show. It said: "TONIGHT - THE GO-GOS and THE MUTANTS." Now how can you not go to that? Even if you've never heard the bands...those names! And that's when I saw them. They were great!

What come next after shooting was done?

We had an audience testing sneak preview screening at this theater on Hollywood Blvd. It was *way* down on the eastern end. It cost like a $1.50 and you'd see a bunch of movies. They had four that night: *Saturday Night Fever, Thank God It's Friday, Nashville Girl* and then ours: four movies on a Tuesday night. I'm outside the theater, and for reasons that escape me a bunch of punk kids randomly came to see that show, maybe eight or ten of 'em. And they nodded hello to me since we'd all go to the same shows or whatever, but I did not invite them. Roger saw me nod hello to them.

Now picture this...you're an LA punk in 1979, and you're just walking in blind to see a sneak preview of some movie you know nothing about. And then, on the screen comes this movie with the Ramones in it! It's like, "Is this an alternate universe?" [Laughs.] So they got really excited! So for $1.50, they're seeing the movie that they'd most want to see with the *band* that they'd most want to see, and they went nuts for the whole movie. They loved it. Afterwards, there was this big argument because the head of distribution thought I'd planted these kids in the audience. Rather than accept that these kids had come out and genuinely liked the movie, there were a lot of accusations. They wanted me to scale back the music scenes, they thought there were too many mentions of the Ramones. This was a big moment of truth out there on the sidewalk. They didn't understand that this was funny, and at the time the Ramones were barely known at all, so to have someone like Riff Randell that's obsessed with them was part of the irony of the film. To a music fan, the band that you love is the biggest band in the world for you. They're the band that counts and you identify with other people that like them. Now, history has proven that these scenes were crucial. The Ramones concert scenes are among the most popular in the movie...they're practically the movie's reason for being in a lot of ways.

Then the movie came out, and it dropped dead. It opened in late April in the Southwest because they wanted the soundtrack album to be ready before it played the big cities, and that wasn't due until June or July. The distribution guys with Corman didn't like the movie and they wanted to prove it. It got to Chicago, where it was on a double bill with *Dawn of the Dead*, and Siskel and Ebert gave it a good review. They knew it would get a great reaction in New York, and it didn't open there until August. It played on 8th Street for two weeks and it did fantastic. It was packed and the audience loved it, the kind of reaction that the movie should've had. I got to hang out with the Ramones all weekend, we had a party at The Mudd Club and it was great. By that point, it was taking off as a midnight movie, and now it's really become widely accepted.

P.J. SOLES

"Riff Randell" – *ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL*

DAM: What are the origins of Riff Randell as a character?

PJ: Allan Arkush has said he based her character on himself during the time he was in high school and also when he worked at the Fillmore East. So he had a direct connection to Riff's true identity. I always thought it was so cool that her name was Riff. I've even met a few couples at autograph conventions that have named their daughters Riff: a nice tribute.

How did you come into the role? There are stories that you really went after it.

I auditioned along with many other young actresses, and then it was down to me and Rosanna Arquette. I just knew I had to play this character, and as far as "going after it," that was always the case when I wanted a role. You try your best, no matter how many times they have you back. In the last audition, Roger Corman came into the room, and just glanced at me and barked, "Make your hair more blond and you've got the part." I jumped up and down and hugged Allan. I still had to wait for my agent to confirm it, but I knew I could bring a wholesome image to Riff, but still give her an infectious and edgy energy.

Were you given the freedom to play the part the way you wanted?

Absolutely! I was on a mission to make Riff pop off the screen. As soon as the camera rolled, I made a point to turn up the afterburners on my internal energy. Sounds crazy, but I think it worked, because whenever Riff is on the screen, she vibrates, and that was my intention. I think I brought a more wholesome image to Riff than other actresses might have, but I believe her innocence is what made her determination to get her songs to the Ramones much more believable. Riff was a songwriter! When she camps out in front of the theater to be first in line, and is confronted by Angel Dust, she really resents being labeled "a cheerleader," and makes it a point to classify Angel Dust as "a groupie." Riff was *not* a groupie.

Allan always had a smile on his face during filming, but he never said too much to me. I think when the film was edited, that was when he was really happy he had hired me.

It's mentioned elsewhere that you did Riff's costume design on your own. Was that the case?

There was only a mere $200 for Riff's wardrobe! So I knew what my small salary was going to be, and I decided to spend it all on Riff's clothes. This character's look was so important. At that time there was a store from New York that had just opened in Beverly Hills, a bit ahead of its time, called Fiorrucci's. It was as if it was intended just for Riff. Perfect outfits. I bought everything there except the red satin jacket with the musical notes on it that I wear in the opening scene. I wanted my opening line: "I'm Riff Randall, and this is rock 'n' roll high school" to really make an impression. That jacket I bought at Fred Segal's, and it was $300, so I had it on hold for a few days while I decided about spending that kind of money—this is 1978—and when I finally returned to get it, Rod Stewart was at the counter. He saw them bring it out from the back, and he practically ripped it from the salesgirl's hands. But I told him I was buying it for a movie role, and it was vital to my character's identity. He really wanted it, but he saw I was desperate to have it. I paid in cash. It was a sweet memory. I always wondered if Rod ever saw the film, and thought, "Hey, there's that jacket I wanted!" Highly unlikely, but it's one of my fantasies.

Were you already an honest-to-God Ramones fan, or interested in punk at all?

I had never heard of the Ramones until Allan gave me a cassette. At that time, I was listening to Jackson Browne, Eagles, Linda Ronstadt...you know, "poetry music." I played the cassette for Dennis—Quaid... we were married later that year—and I ran around the house screaming, "What is this? Is this even *music*?" Looking back on it, it was a ridiculous reaction, but it was so alien to anything I'd heard up till then. Now, of course, I totally appreciate their originality. I love, love their songs now. And I'm so honored to have been in a movie with them.

What was it like to spend time with them on set?

There isn't much to say, because we hardly knew they were there. They were like wallpaper. They were shy and quiet and so out of their element. They had to be pulled by their arms to the catering truck at lunch and convinced it was OK to eat with us. I know that Johnny Ramone loved Roger Corman films, and I had heard that he was a bit intimidated to actually be in one. It was a very surreal experience for the whole band. Just being in Los Angeles probably wasn't easy; not much street life compared to New York City. They had to be driven everywhere. I don't know what they did on their days off.

We had to do more than a few takes when any of them had dialogue, but they eventually got the hang of it. In contrast to their acting scenes, when they were being filmed onstage for the concert footage, they were amazing. They just played over and over so consistently. I love watching the concert scenes now. There is no other punk band that comes close to the Ramones.

I also thought that the "fantasy" scene in "Riff's" bedroom was really cool. That was the first day of filming. The first day I met the Ramones. Quite an introduction for us all, but it was a fun day. I thought Joey was really sweet. He wanted to do a good job, and since he was singing he was comfortable. I love when the camera pans to Johnny watching us, and he has this embarrassed smile on his face... it's so genuine!

The scenes at the concert venue seemed chaotic and featured actual punks. Any fun stories from that portion of the shoot?

I wouldn't say "fun stories." Dey Young and I felt a little threatened at times. The crowd were actual Ramones fans, and they came for a concert, not a film shoot, so every time they heard Allan yell "Cut!," they moaned and groaned, and got more and more upset. They couldn't stand that Dey and I were trying to work our way up to the front row. They didn't really understand that it was a scene that we were filming, so they kept pushing us out of the way like we were trying to steal their spots. We had to stop a few times when Dey and I couldn't even make it up to our marks. Looking back it's funny, but at the time, we were somewhat afraid.

What was it like working with Mary Woronov, Clint Howard and the other actors?

Mary Woronov was so perfect as Miss Togar, especially since she is not like that at all. She's a brilliant painter, and she has so many talents, was part of the Warhol scene in New York, and she was a lot of fun to talk to. She had some great stories! I was always laughing and in disbelief about some of the things she said. Clint was great too...so warm-hearted, sweet and kind. I didn't really have any scenes with him, but he was always very friendly.

Dey Young and I hit it off immediately, and we were like best friends from the start. We had so much fun in our scenes together. We were always laughing and we did a lot of ad-libbing, like the bedroom scene when Tom calls Riff for a date. And the telephone booth scene...we had to film that whole sequence with us in the car up to the phone call to the radio station in just a few takes because we were running out of time at that location. Dey and I knew our lines and characters so well that when the camera wasn't rolling, we were just always making jokes and laughing hysterically, and that fueled our energy.

MARY WORONOV

"Principal Togar" – *ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL;*
"Audrey" – *NIGHT OF THE COMET;* "Dancing Mary" – *NOMADS;*
"Mrs. Putterman" – *TERRORVISION*

DAM: You've said that you thought the California punk scene kindo got short shrift compared to the East Coast.

MW: Definitely. I think that the punk scenes in London and on the East Coast were well documented. The point is that there was a very different California scene, and it was very original and it almost got no play whatsoever.

The last scene of any kind in LA was the punk scene, and since then it's been totally dead.

Were you living in LA at the time when it was kind of hitting its apex?

I was living in LA, but I was married and completely oblivious. I thought I had grown up and would never see those days again. Then I got a boyfriend, and he was a punk, and through him I was introduced to the LA scene. But that was after The Masque. The Masque was the beginning and it was the touchstone of the starting of the scene, and I never saw The Masque, but I saw everything else. And when I say everything else, I mean the Zero Club, the famous Starwood—I mean places that were downtown. What would happen is that the band would set up, and about a half hour into their set, people would start destroying the place. Nothing in downtown is empty at night, and you would see these punks running from one block to another, and then you would see squad cars running from one block to the other. It was kind of amazing. It was very, very apocalyptic and surreal, unlike the party scene at CBGBs in New York.

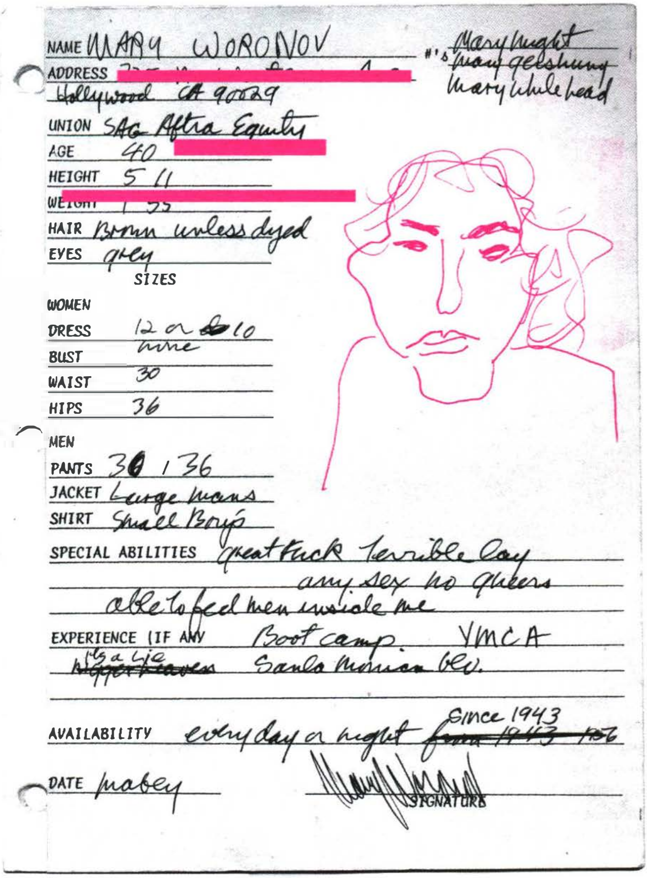
The punk scene I saw was real garage bands; they started in garages with kids and they got it together and they started playing around.

I remember that people would all hang outside—all these little punk rockers—and when I say little, I'm very tall, and another reason I say little was that these kids were much younger than me. It was really cool to not even go inside, but just to stay outside and chat and get high. Especially until the band you wanted was there, and then you would go in and rip the place apart. One time I remember being at some hole in the wall in an area I didn't know, and there was this line of punks outside this club. They were all complaining that they didn't have the money to go in, and then there were gunshots from somewhere, and all of a sudden they all produced this enormous amount of money in order to get inside. So, you can surmise from that story that many of these kids were well off, they were not poor, downtrodden kids, they come from rich or certainly middle-class families, and they had everything.

The other interesting thing about the LA punk scene is that it had a weird—or, I thought it was advanced—sexual thing. It wasn't boy-girl, boy-girl like the rock 'n' roll scene was; it was definitely the girls in one group and the boys in another group. And I guess they were all so loaded that they never thought about having sex, but they were all dressed like they were having mad sex. They would sort of pile together like puppies, you know, just lie all over each other and cuddle and everything and then break apart. And the girls went around by themselves—there was no dating that I ever saw. It was interesting and really cool.

So, this is all when you're getting into it? What years were those?

I'm not sure. I got into it when I was getting divorced and I moved into the West end. Normally, what happens in LA is that there are many, many buildings—it's not like New York—and these buildings, all of a sudden one person would start living there and then everybody would move out because they looked weird and acted even weirder. Then all the punkers would move in and you'd get all these buildings of punk rockers, and my building was something like that. A major bunch of punk rockers hung out there, so it was a known little punk village. And that's how I got to know most of the bands and most of the shows, and bands that nobody had ever heard of like Suburban



NAME MARY WORONOV #'s Mary Might
Mary Geeshung
Mary Whitehead

ADDRESS [redacted]
Hollywood CA 90029

UNION SAG Aftra Equity

AGE 40 [redacted]

HEIGHT 5 11

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HAIR Brown unless dyed

EYES grey

SIZES

WOMEN

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HIPS 36

MEN

PANTS 30 / 36

JACKET Large mans

SHIRT Small Boys

SPECIAL ABILITIES great Fuck terrible lay
any sex no queers
able to feed men inside me

EXPERIENCE (IF ANY Boot camp. YMCA
It's a lie ~~Nigger heaven~~ Santa Monica blv.

AVAILABILITY every day or night Since 1943 ~~from 1943 1956~~

DATE mabey

SIGNATURE

Lawns, The Mau-Mau's. These bands were great.

I love Suburban Lawns! That song "Janitor" is one of my favorites.

Yeah, but nobody talks about them. I love them too.

It's weird that they were just forgotten.

But there were many, many bands like that. They didn't play for very long, maybe. We used to try to go to see The Mau-Mau's, but they'd almost never show up because they were too stoned to get to their gig, but they were wonderful when they did. Maybe that was once every seven years, but it was great. Also there was Fear, and they were major. X, of course, was the leading one.

When you got involved with *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, were you already getting into all this stuff?

No, I think I did *Rock 'n' Roll High School* while I was still married. And that was probably the first time I encountered punk. Of course, I knew who the Ramones were, because their manager was someone who worked with Andy Warhol.

I started doing *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, and I thought I was gonna get a TV series out of it. Mainly because I needed money and I didn't want to be married. But then I saw the kids who were the extras and they were all punk rockers, and even my make-up lady was a punk rocker. She was on roller skates and she'd come at me with these pointed brushes. So, everything changed. I reverted back to when I played the Conqueror of the Universe in the Theatre of the Ridiculous, which was a thing with Andy and I was a major player in that. And that's what Miss Togar is; she's the conqueror of the universe. In other words, this punk audience suddenly just freed me up and I went back to what I love and what Hollywood hated, and Miss Togar was born. She's sexually deranged and power crazy. So then the punk rockers immediately saw her as the authority figure who they hate.

One of the best things that I did, and it got an award, was the Suicidal Tendencies video. I did two videos for them, and played the monster mom.

Apart from theater, Miss Togar was the first time onscreen where you played that sort of vicious authority figure, but you felt well prepared for it?

In *Conquest of the Universe*, this is a man who was violent, perverted, his own worst enemy, and I was told I could do whatever I liked onstage. And that's the way it was; everybody had to make up rules around me and get around me. Meanwhile, my entire court was always preparing me dinner by shitting in a pail, and I knew about it and I thought it was wonderful because it showed they loved me. It was just insane. It was real insanity. And I brought that into Miss Togar. She does not act like a normal woman; she's camp, she comments on that kind of woman. Nobody really acts like that.

Hopefully.

But it didn't end there. *TerrorVision*, that was another camp role, and that was the Italians trying to do what they thought America was like. And Gerrit Graham, who was opposite me, both of us were right into it. He's a very good camp actor. He did something called *Phantom of the Paradise*, and he was completely camp and out of his mind in that.

And he was doing regular studio drama stuff at the same time.

I know. He was very, very schizo and it drove him nuts. But he was wonderful in *TerrorVision* with me. He was a perfect husband.

Yeah, I love that movie.

I thought it was completely dead.

Oh no, I'm crazy about it.

It's interesting, isn't it?

It's really well done, and I think it's really cunning because it's an anti-complacent family movie.

Oh yeah, it's a total camp thing on a family. Nobody is really like that. Hollywood calls it mugging, but I don't call it that. It's a certain art form and has nothing to do with playing a real mom. It has to do with commenting on or emphasizing mom's problems, and it also has an amazing amount of humor.

So, that was all shot in Europe?

That was shot in Italy. In Rome.

According to Jon Gries, who played the heavy metal character O.D. in that movie, it was inhumanly hot the whole time you guys were there.

We had this old studio that was shut down...it was very famous for being where Liz Taylor did *Cleopatra*. It was so hot that when I looked out my dressing room window the hills were on fire. I swear to god, they started burning the grass. It was so weird that place.

How did you get involved in that movie?

I wanted to go to Italy, and when I got there, I realized I could once again play an insane person. Well, I don't consider it insane. Some people call it overacting.

That's a style of comedy, that's a grand tradition.

But the director went along with it. They gave me this blue dress that was Naugahyde. These Italians were insane.

But it was a good experience overall?

Yes.

Good. It makes me happy to know that you like the movie because I think it's really underappreciated.

Everything I've done is underappreciated.

So you did *Rock 'n' Roll High School* when you were first getting familiar with the punk scene?

Well, that was my first picture of it, and then I went back to my marriage and my marriage broke up and when I started living in Western Ave., Jane Cantillon would go out every night and I started going out with her. And she took me everywhere. She's the kind of person who knows everyone and everything that's going on. I mean, she was friends with Brendan Mullen, who has chronicled the punk scene in two books, and he was at The Masque. And then we were good friends with the head of the Zero Club. And there were all these people in the bands like El Duce from The Mentors and they're sort of your housepets. And, of course, there were bands like Fear, who were very, very aggressive and fabulous. I once saw Lee Ving play and he was covered in an inch of saliva. Everybody in the world was spitting on him.

On the set of *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, what were your interactions with the punk kids?

They were very savvy about what was happening. They understood but were not impressed by the fact that we were filming. And they took it on themselves to act as they thought they should act in a movie. And of course they loved the Ramones.

When I interviewed Allan Arkush, he said that they were really freaked out by the extras that showed up because he didn't know how they were going to behave.

Yes, but they behaved great. They were also great when the guy Allan Arkush hired blew up the school. They didn't freak out. They didn't run and say, "Fire!" They moved to a normal safe level, but they stayed right there.

I heard that explosion was a lot bigger than anyone anticipated.

Well, this guy they hired was crazy. They hired him because he's cheap, but he's blown people heads off. He's insane. He really overdoes it. He's a pyrotechnic maniac.

Speaking of Allan Arkush...

Allan Arkush had the finest record and tape collection I had ever seen in my life. He knew songs that I knew of that nobody knows anymore. He knows like the Shangri-Las' song, "I Can Never Go Home Anymore," and nobody knows that.

The next movie Allan Arkush did was so chaotic, that *Get Crazy* movie that you were in.

You see, with Corman, we could do what we liked, and we were all together, and the minute you walk on the set you know something weird is going on here and you got with the team and great things happened. With *Get Crazy*, Hollywood was there, and they sort of made it kind of weird, and it wasn't as successful as *Rock 'n' Roll High School*. It wasn't as wild.

I think that movie is great. Honestly, I like it as much as *Rock 'n' Roll High School* as a movie. I think it really is fun, but..

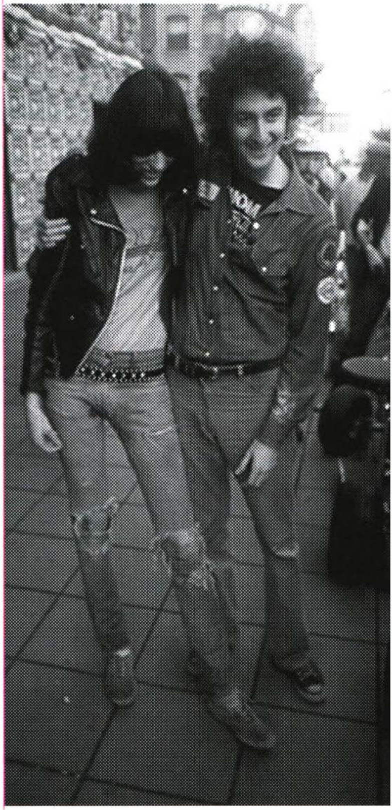
I didn't like it as much because I didn't have a role that I really liked.

That's fair. But, was it really that chaotic on set? Because that movie seems completely uncontrolled.

No, it wasn't chaotic at all. It was more of a Hollywood movie. *Rock 'n' Roll High School* was chaotic. I mean Alan had a damn heart attack during the middle of it.

And he was only in his late 20s.

I know. It was scary. *Rock 'n' Roll High School* was real honest madness. The fact that *Get Crazy* looks chaotic and crazy has more to do with Hollywood magic.



Probably one of the weirdest movies we have in the book is *Nomads*.

That was done by John McTiernan. He does all those big-budget action movies. But, at that time, he was in love with the strangeness of the punk scene. He would make everyone go to this strange little restaurant that had outdoor seating. You knew not to eat any of the food, but you sort of hung out there, and this was like you're on the last legs of your drug binge. He would go to this place like it was a temple. He did have this insane vision for this movie. It was good. I love my scene where I dance on the car.

Aren't you credited as "Dancing Mary"?

Am I?

I think that's what it says in the credits.

Jesus Christ.

And you're there with Josie Cotton and all these people...

Adam Ant. Adam Ant was good.

Yeah, he ended up doing quite a bit of acting.

It was interesting. He wasn't really liked. He was a strange man, and he had trouble on that set.

The film was based on such a strange idea.

The script was brilliant. The script was from an Eskimo myth, and it says that if you're on the ice and nobody's around, if you see someone you have to be very careful in approaching them because it might be a succubus that takes your life. And so what they did is make the nomads out of those people.

So, for some reason, these immortal, restless spirits manifested as punks in this movie?

He was nuts about punks. But I don't think he was interested in the music...he was interested in the look.

That makes sense. That's usually the case where punks showed up in a lot of movies. Like there's always a cluster of punk kids to indicate that somebody's in the wrong part of town or that things are out of control.

Well, in Germany, it goes back to Nazism, but in LA it's always apocalyptic. I think it has to do with America's thing with "moving West" and when you get to LA, you can't go West anymore, there's this black ocean and it's the end. It wasn't like New York, where punk was really fashionable. Here it wasn't fashion, it was just the way people were.

Being that punk was a genuine interest to you and what you were doing socially, it seems like once you did Togar, you ended up playing so many formal doctors, teachers...

I know: it was a real bore.

So when you were doing these roles were you kind of playing it deliberately against type?

No, I needed money. That's all they would hire me as.

That's too bad.

It is too bad, but sometimes they were into something. Like the guy who did *Night of the Comet*, he was into something else. But I ended up playing a boring scientist. Some of these doctors and teachers and shrinks get very boring.

But in that case, that was a really good role—you were a sympathetic character, and Geoffrey Lewis was really good in his part so you guys did great stuff together.

I would ask the director like, "Can I shoot up and die on Christmas?" And he would go, "Yeah." And I would go, "Can I write my own dialogue?" And he'd go, "Yeah."

Wow, so you got to do all that?

Yeah. That one scene where I shoot up and die on Christmas, I wrote the dialogue.

CLINT HOWARD

"Eaglebauer" – *ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL*

CH: I'd worked with Allan Arkush and Roger Corman on *Grand Theft Auto*, and we all had a great time on that. I knew they were developing this new film and I wanted to be involved. But when I went in for it, they'd already decided that they wanted me. I didn't even have to audition, really.

DAM: The concert scene features some actual LA punks, including Darby Crash. What was it like when they were filming that segment?

It was crazy! Allan ran that as a regular show, just like a concert except every song was done multiple times. The kids had to be on their feet for hours. The other actors and I would just be brought in for our shots, but the extras were there forever.

How did the Ramones behave on set?

Oh, they were just the greatest guys. Not professional actors by any stretch, but they were incredibly easy to get along with. I really hit it off with Johnny, and stayed friends with him long after, rest his soul. Joey was really quiet, but still a great guy.

Did working with them and on this film spark an interest in punk, or were you already interested in it at all?

I was never a "punk" outright, and to be honest, I was initially disappointed that the Ramones got the band role instead of Cheap Trick, who were originally the group that was going to invade the school and all. But it all worked out great. The movie wouldn't be what it is if it had been any other band.

ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL FOREVER

Dir. Deborah Brock / 1991

Part one was fun. This is not part one.

Not the Rock 'n' Roll High School you remember. The Ramones are gone. Instead we get psychobilly artist Mojo Nixon, who is fine but it just isn't the same. The main problem here is that the film just doesn't seem to get itself or understand where it wants to go. Its idea of a funny moment is Corey Feldman pretending to worship a fridge. Huh? His band plays the prom. One member of the group is a lady with subtle punk touches including an army jacket and dyed black hair. They kick into a version of "Tutti Frutti" that somehow shocks and enrages the crowd with its apparent blistering sonic assault. By 1991, punk was a step away from the fucking JC Penney; to have the majority of a high school shocked by a tame cover of a Little Richard song clearly shows the incognizance of the filmmakers. At school, a girl with pink hair converses with homies, and a schlubby bodyguard has a devil lock. Director Brock went on to co-produce the much better *Honey, I Blew Up the Kid*. (*BC*)

ROCK N' ROLL MOBSTER GIRLS

Dir. Rick Werner / 1988

A mostly false chronicle of The Doll Squad, a doomed rock act at the teetering point of Seattle's pre-grunge musical morass.

A camcorder-bearing crew follows local luminaries from bands like Cat Butt, Crisis Party and Girl Trouble as they comment on the scene as well as the mystery surrounding the murder of Doll Squad manager Bruno Multrock. The film alternates between unbearable live performances and manufactured Seattle rock history. An unworthy shadow to *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, this is like a horrible wreck that wipes out every innocent bystander on the roadside. I recommend making full use of your VCR's fast-forward button...or better yet, aim a gun at the EJECT button and pull the fucking trigger. (*ZC*)

ROCKIN' ROAD TRIP

Dir. William Olsen / 1985

Severely irritating people are thrown together in confined spaces, and you're right there with them.

Pogo punks, bikers and assorted goofs wait outside a Boston club for a performance by spandex-rockers Cherry Suicide. Vocalist Nicole pulls acrobatic jazzercise moves to the crowd's delight, but the show is ruined when her leather-wrapped, clown-haired former squeeze Ivan assaults her with a switchblade on stage. The crowd riots and Ivan has an asthma attack after punching his estranged girlfriend in the stomach. Later, Ivan breaks into her apartment for romantic vengeance but ends up knocked unconscious by a frying pan instead. Nicole steals his wallet, calls her bandmates and the whole crew takes off for an impromptu Southern tour. After several awkward roadside and/or Jacuzzi misadventures, Ivan tracks them down at a Christian circus. This Troma-distributed summertime party comedy from the director of the barely superior *Getting It On* is as anemic as its pasty Caucasian performers, and its biggest laugh comes from Ivan's tragically receding punk hairdo. Though the pie-fighting dildo salesman comes in a close second. (*ZC*)

ROCKULA

Dir. Luca Bercovici / 1990

A kind-hearted vampire forms a band to win his true love.

I'M NOT GOING TO DO IT.
NO WAY!

The least entertaining of the post-*Teen Wolf* party monster comedy glut, but the only one with Bo Diddley wearing gold spandex. Dean Cameron plays dweebish vampire Ralph, worn down by his generations-old lost romance. When his former flame is reincarnated, Ralph starts a band called Rockula to catch her attention. The backing musicians include Diddley and beautifully manic character actress Susan Tyrrell, and their first gig is a crowd-blasting success despite the fact that they perform only one song. Ralph is wildly congratulated by the locals, including LA punk DJ Rodney on the Roq, the Surf Punks and a lone blue-haired night rocker. Matters are later complicated by casket salesman/would-be vampire hunter Stanley (10-minute new wave icon Thomas Dolby) and Ralph's zany, rappin', dancin', free-lovin' vampire mom (10-minute new wave icon Toni Basil). Also on hand is pre-adolescent song-and-dance group Visiting Kids, consisting entirely of Devo members' pre-adolescent daughters. Lastly, do yourself a favor and stop existing before the scene where Ralph transforms into a squat, farting batmonster. (*ZC*)

RODRIGO D: NO FUTURE

Dir. Victor Gaviria / 1989

Colombian poverty punks on self-destruct.

"Money! Anguish! Money! Trouble! Money! Problems!" blares as seemingly straight-laced youth Rodrigo wanders the streets. A shady junior huckster walks alongside him, having recognized him as a burgeoning drummer and hoping to sell him some hardcore cassettes. Disinterested, Rodrigo continues his typical day of resigned aimlessness. He heads to a punk comrade's house, switches out a Clash tape for a Colombian band and begins pounding out the beat on his knees. He steals his brother's school notebooks and sketches marker portraits of his favorite punk musicians. He travels across town to buy a drum set, but its owner will only sell to a metal band because "punks are just a bunch of good-for-nothings."

Rodrigo's friends sell drugs to children and get in shootouts with the police. Strangely enough, the only employed member of their shabby gang is a mohawked woodworker in a swastika-adorned Sex Pistols tank top. He fashions Rodrigo a pair of handmade drumsticks that the boy carries everywhere, beating away on brick walls and everything else. Given an opportunity to play on actual drums (with a guitarist!), Rodrigo shows passion for the first time, shrieking lyrics while vigorously pounding away with surprising talent. Eventually, petty crime brings down more trouble than even these streetwise kids can handle, providing the picture's ultimate display of hopelessness.

Gaviria's film captures the desperate emptiness of an otherwise untapped world, where a hardcore trio plays a favela rooftop for an audience of three slamming teens. Living emotionlessly among the inhabited ruins, Rodrigo's own primal outlook is summed up in his scant moments of dialogue, including gems like "Let's all be punks and do nothing" and "Women are such farts." A notice before the closing credits states that four of the actors died before age 20 due to circumstances similar to those onscreen. Music by Pestes, Mutantax, Agresor, Blasfemia and other South American punk and metal acts. *(ZC)*

ROLLER BLADE

Dir. Donald G. Jackson / 1985

The Holy Order of Roller Nuns battle to restore humanity.

The Apocalypse has ushered in the one law of the New Dark Age: everyone *must* skate. Those who don't are tracked down and murdered by mutants and cold-blooded wasteoids. The rubble is dotted with skate-deck tombstones, one of which fittingly reads "SKATE OR DIE." Roller skates are particularly sacred, and are anointed with sacred oil by the Holy Order. Each of these battling she-saints wears what looks like a red Klan hood and an iron cross.

This is the setting for one of the most weirdly chaotic releases of the '80s. The insanity starts off strong in the opening sequence, where a puppet rises from a bathtub to decapitate a bikini-clad nun. Meanwhile, wheelchair-bound Holy Order leader Mother Speed chats with a cop about his dead wife's roller-skating abilities: "She could skate like an angel...now she is one."

The antagonist is the evil Saticoy, played by a rubber Halloween mask with glued-on baby doll arms. Really. He speaks to his followers through a vacuum cleaner hose. In one memorable segment, he strips a full-body layer of tin foil off of a suspended woman and gums her nipple.

Three mohawked punks beat a kid to death with a skateboard before each being kicked in the nuts by a bound villainess. They later return for vengeance, but are quickly redefeated and captured by the rollersheriff. He takes them down to HQ, where the double-hawked offender begs him to "forgive them their trespasses."

The delirium is unstoppable. Mother Speed makes three injured women rub each other in a Jacuzzi, Saticoy does some mean jazz scatting and a dog revives a dead hobo by licking his neck. The three punks show up every 10 minutes, only to be instantly laid out by a woman in an aerobics outfit or whacked in the crotch. They viciously beat the reanimated hobo while misquoting Ramones lyrics. The bum dies again, is re-revived by the dog and the punks return to beat him once more. He grabs one of them and says that he's going to "break their hair," and when the fight is over, the victorious vagabond announces to the wind that he "fixed their spiky butts."

Particularly distracting is the fact that there are no actual rollerblade skates in the entire film. Writer/director Jackson told one interviewer, "I came up with the title long before the rollerblade style of skate were released. I always wondered if they saw the movie and if that is where they got the idea for their name." When asked if he had an interest in skate culture, he replied, "No, I leave the roller-skating and rollerblading to other people."

As is often the case with Jackson's movies, quality is brazenly cast aside in the name of vision. *Roller Blade* was made for a grand total of $5,000. The entire movie is dubbed, all the male parts handled by a single, very questionable voice actor. When the black deputy speaks, all his dialogue ends with the word "mon." Certain scenes appear as if they were shot in 8mm and spliced in with the 16mm footage, and a close-up of a harmonica reveals that it's just a comb wrapped in duct tape. Nevertheless, New World Pictures eventually threw in some completion funds and handled the VHS distribution. They billed it as "The First Straight-to-Video Feature Film," and against all odds, it made the company over a million dollars, leading them to finance Jackson's next project, *Hell Comes to Frogtown*.

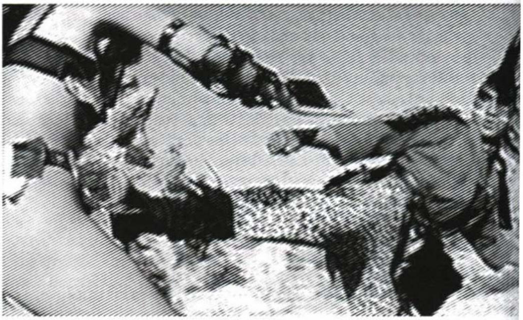
This was the second feature from lauded VHS-era warrior Jackson, and the first of five (!) sci-fi rollerblade epics he'd complete before his death in 2003. *(ZC)*

ROLLER BLADE WARRIORS: TAKEN BY FORCE

Dir. Donald G. Jackson / 1989

More wheeled wasteland warfare.

The direct sequel to *Roller Blade* from fountainously prolific no-grade auteur Jackson. *Phoenix the Warrior*'s Kathleen Kinmont is



Karen Cross, a soldier from the Holy Order of Roller Nuns. As in the previous film, a group of scumbags kidnap women to sacrifice to a rubber beast. One of these radioactive degenerates is Kosai (real-life punkwad Johnnie Saiko), a mohawked, war-painted maniac in a Monkees jacket. When not menacing members of the local sisterhood, he wields a sword and acts like a dog. He and his cronies eventually kill one of the nuns while digital banjo music plays. Karen Cross stumbles sadly across the desert for the majority of the film—rollerblading on sand is not for sissies—but things nearly pick up when her friend is kidnapped and she heads out to the rescue. The great Rory Calhoun (*Angel, Night of the Lepus*) makes a surprise appearance, but is upstaged by Kosai, who makes wacky cartoon noises and ends most sentences with "Boink!" Once again, no one is on rollerblades. (*ZC*)

ROMEO + JULIET

Dir. Baz Luhrmann / 1996

Forbidden teenage lust wrapped up in psychedelic seizure.

A '90s remake of the classic play, this film took quite a few unnecessary liberties to hip it up for the kids. The basic plot is there—Romeo (Leonardo DiCaprio) falls in love with Juliet (Claire Danes), a member of a rival family—but with a modern milieu. For example, the families are now corporations, the swords are guns and Mercutio is a joyful transvestite. Also, originally a servant to the Capulets, in this film Sampson (Jamie Kennedy), runs in Romeo's gang. With his Pepto Bismol-pink hair and Montague-issued Hawaiian shirt, he looks like a punk who ate Jimmy Buffett.

In some sort of ill-advised experiment, this adaptation revamped the aesthetic but not the dialogue, meaning actors who struggle with the basic tenets of modern grammar were expected to believably deliver intricate prose composed in iambic pentameter. As a result, pretty much everyone ends up sounding like William Shatner as they attempt to colloquialize their lines. The one exception is Father Laurence (Pete Postlethwaite), who stays true to the meter and delivers a strong performance.

This was one of many '90s modernizations of Shakespeare for the teen demographic. Luhrmann's vision is supersaturated with neon colors and looks like a tourism commercial for Las Vegas. And maybe that's fitting because, after all, this is a movie about two teenagers who meet outside the men's room at a party and get married the next day. (*LAF*)

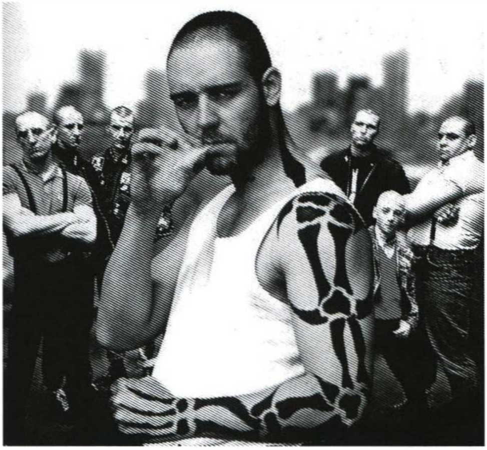
ROMPER STOMPER

Dir. Geoffrey Wright / 1992

Neo-Nazi skinhead Hando (Russell Crowe)
has a hard time making the world bend to his will.

This is a scary movie. Around the world, there's a number of people who believe in the Nazi ideal. There are many of these terrifying characters in this film, but it primarily focuses on three. One is a girl named Gabe, who's epileptic, takes illegal drugs to "control her fits" and has been sexually abused since childhood. The next is Davey, second-in-command of the local skinhead group; he appears to be the most levelheaded and even somewhat intelligent. Most important is Hando, the leader of Melbourne's skinhead faction. He's the embodiment of hate, anger, violence and an odd sort of magnetism that draws those who need to be led.

The skinheads pick up Gabe at a pub and Hando stakes his claim immediately. As they walk home, he throws a garbage can through a shop window to get a jacket that she likes. From then on, she's smitten. They all live in a warehouse with two gothpunk girls who arranged the squat for a small monthly fee from an old hippie. Soon, Davey has eyes for Gabe as well, but just watches as she follows Hando around like a lovesick puppy. A neighboring gang of skins show up and a sweaty, hairless, skanking, beer-guzzling, oi party ensues. When some of them rise the next morning, they go off to the neighborhood pub while the owner is selling the place to a Vietnamese family restaurant. This development doesn't sit well, and violence begets violence until everything falls apart. Daniel Pollock, who played Davey, committed suicide before the film's release. (*JH*)

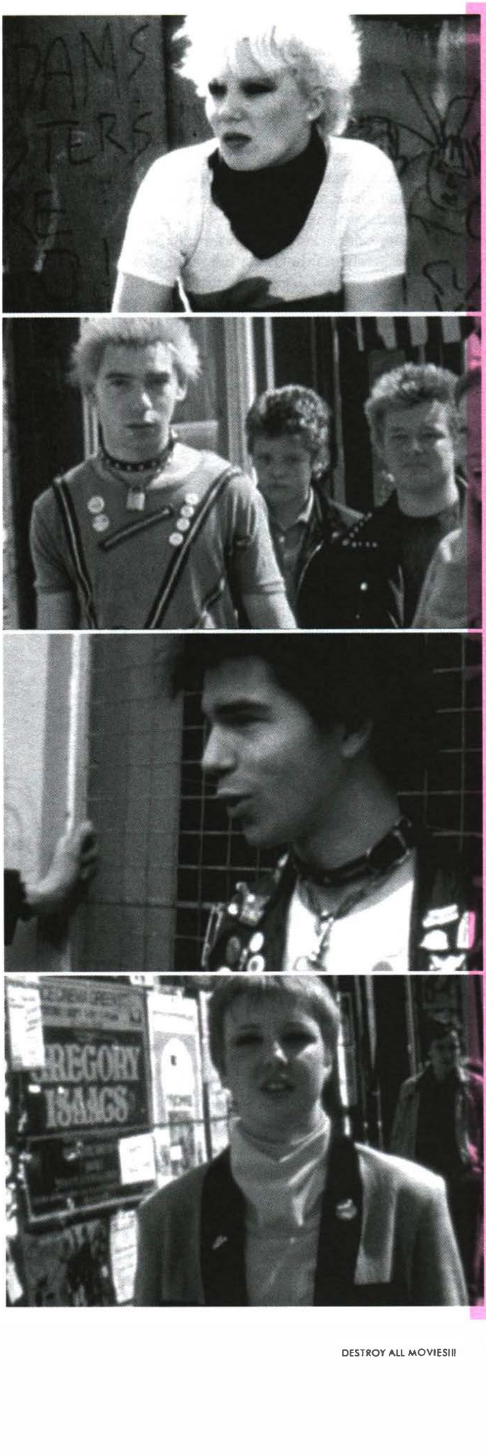


ROOFTOPS

Dir. Robert Wise / 1989

Rival gangs duke it out on the rooftops
and dance arenas of New York City.

Mr. Wise, how far ye have fallen. The director of *The Sound of Music* and the original *The Haunting* took a big turd for his final theatrical release. A giant skinhead chase opens the film. These skins are portrayed as wacky dopes and are thwarted by falling through the rooftops. By the way, the word "rooftop" is mentioned a lot in this film...you know, just in case you forgot what you were watching. Most disputes are settled by "dancefighting," where two opponents face each other and must knock the other person out of the ring without touching, so they just do a lot of breakdancing and



martial arts moves. Our hero T is the master. When hard times hit (a kid gets thrown off a...rooftop), T does a little drunken dancefighting. A punk with a mohawk, ponytail and camouflage pants joins in the ridiculous sport during a street party where well-dressed folks boogie in the ghetto. You know what's not punk *or* tough? Friggin' choreographed dancing. At the very end, the confused punk wears a tank top with a peace sign on it. Waaaaaah! (*BC*)

ROUGH CUT AND READY DUBBED

Dirs. Hasan Shah & Dom Shaw / 1982

A fragmented Super 8 exploration of British punk's dividing lines.

Images of various UK punk youths cut in and out over a benign acoustic track. The kids range from fresh-faced mods to drunk-in-public Sid Vicious idolizers. Some glare at the camera in open mockery while others rattle off their favorite bands: Siouxsie & the Banshees, X-Ray Spex, Skrewdriver, The Fall and so on. Bands perform, including The Selecter, Cockney Rejects and A Certain Ratio. Stiff Little Fingers play for an enormous crowd that eventually breaks into low-impact rioting. In a private interview, SLF vocalist Jake Burns declares that "the only real punk bands that have ever existed are the Sex Pistols and The Damned." The U.K. Subs and Cockney Rejects throw in their two cents on the well-traveled subject of Selling Out. Charles Shaar Murray of NME talks trash on Sham 69 before we're shown a cabaret-infused performance of their "Poor Cow," singer Jimmy Pursey mugging for the camera. Radio DJ demigod John Peel is distinctly likeable, offering a respectably self-deprecating angle on his role in punk history. Much discussion is given to the differences between traditional skinheads and the British nationalist variety, one of whom shows his knife scars from a battle "with the nig-nogs." Besides this small pocket of thugs, everyone interviewed is genuinely proactive, involved and excited about the UK's rich-but-already-fading punk movement. (*ZC*)

RUDE BOY

Dirs. Jack Hazan & David Mingay / 1980

A quietly grim study of a young UK punk's daily life.

Ray (Ray Gange) is an employee at the local porn shop, where a businessman nervously requests strong bondage mags featuring black women. Ray is passably respectful and clean-cut, but his leather jacket is enough to get him picked up by the cops. Upon his release from the holding cell, he wanders the streets with a skinhead pal while footage from an actual National Front protest is cut in. A cop is taken down by a tossed brick. Ray pops into a club for an appropriately-timed Clash performance of "Police and Thieves." Ray meets up with the band afterwards, engaging in alcohol-clouded political philosophizing with Joe Strummer before stumbling over to another bar, where he semi-graphically woos a girl in the ladies' room.

He spends a good deal of time with The Clash over the following days, joining them sidestage for a set in front of a massive outdoor crowd at the anti-Front rally. Someone pulls the plug in the middle of the show, but power is restored in time for a particularly energetic finale of "White Riot" with guest singer Jimmy Pursey of Sham 69. The riveted crowd is a sea of adoring pink faces, and Ray nearly incites a mass rampage when he gets them riled up for a nonexistent encore. Despite this ill-planned move, he's hired to roadie for a series of Clash shows north of London. The rigors include backstage fisticuffs with venue security and hotel-room trysts climaxing with actual vomit, plus a great deal of concert footage thrown in to the mix.

RUDE BOY - The Cast

JOE STRUMMER

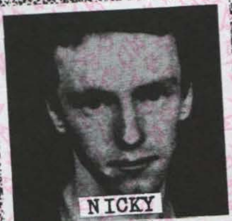
Singer/Rhythm Guitar

MICK JONES

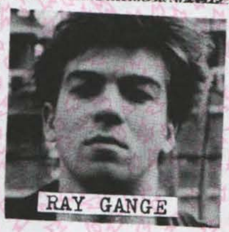
Lead Guitarist
The Clash

PAUL SIMONON

Bass Guitar
The Clash


NICKY 'TOPPER' HEADON

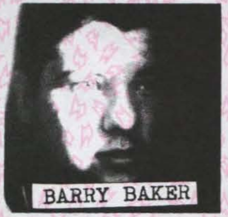
Drummer
The Clash


RAY GANGE

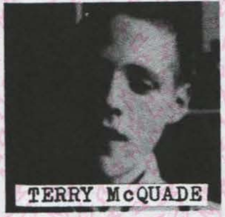
Unemployed

JOHNNY GREEN

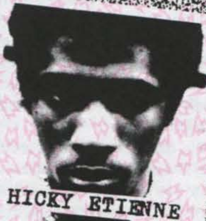
Road Manager
The Clash


BARRY BAKER

Drum Roadie
The Clash


TERRY McQUADE

Ray's Mate


HICKY ETIENNE

Suspect

LIZ

Ray's Girlfriend

LIZARD BROWN

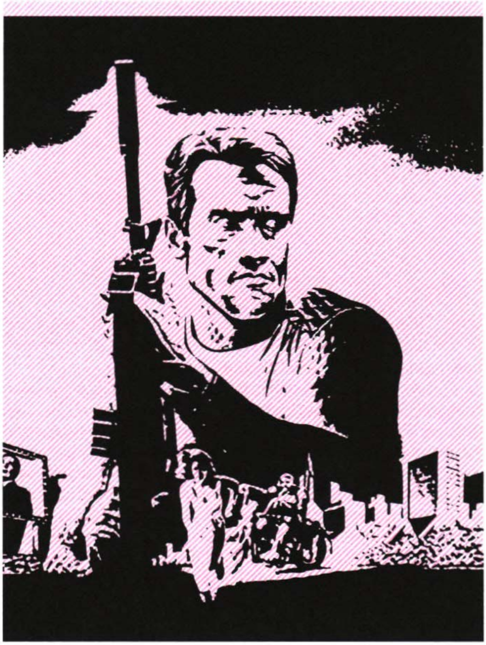
Suspect

CAROLINE COON

Clash
Representative

SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE: JIMMY PURSEY

with: Colin Richards, Colin Bucksey, Lee Parker, Inch Gordon, Kenny Joseph, Sarah Hall



known as Dynamo, who belts out operatic vocal solos in his garish electric battle armor, complete with towering plastic mohawk. The film's only punks are glimpsed as members of the game show's live studio audience, messy rainbow hair and studded accessories the requisite examples of a government-controlled World in Decline. Spearheading all this satellite-fed sadism is The Running Man's TV host Damon Killian, played incredibly well by none other than real life *Family Feud* host/icon Richard Dawson. Even more villainous is the casting of Dweezil Zappa and Fleetwood Mac founder Mick Fleetwood as resistance fighters. If these men are the hope of a new tomorrow, I'll opt for the warm end of the blowtorch. (*ZC*)

RUNNING SCARED

Dir Peter Hyams / 1986

Cops Ray (Gregory Hines) and Danny (Billy Crystal) are
asked to retire, but they just can't relax until they
bring down drug-dealer Gonzales.

This half-hearted action-comedy has very few laughs and barely any excitement. The always fantastic Joe Pantoliano plays sleazy drug dealer Snake, who wears one long earring and has red wispy spikes in the front of what's left of his hair. The actor was in his early 30s when playing this part and it's almost comical that the filmmakers would attempt to mold or dye the last few shreds of this great man's hair (though Mr. Pantoliano would discover the miracle of hair-looming a year later in *Amazon Women on the Moon*). Sadly, his presence does not last the duration of this cure for insomnia. Even sadder is the fact that brilliant character actor Jon Gries plays a bearded cop with nary an interesting thing to do. More tragic still is the fact that I wasted my time on this lame buddy cop movie when I could have been watching superior Joe Pantoliano police film *Bad Boys II* for the thousandth time. The only thing worse than making a boring action movie would be to film a sequel to a Stanley Kubrick film. What's that? You directed *2010*? Shame on you, Peter Hyams. (*BC*)

RUSH WEEK

Dir. Bob Bralver / 1989

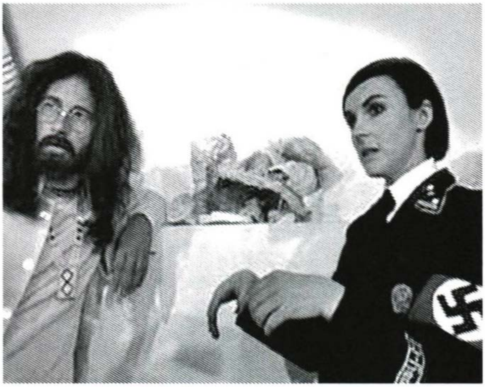
A mysterious hooded figure commits multiple
murders on a college campus.

What would normally have been a brutally typical slasher retread is elevated by awkward comedy and a Halloween party performance from silly punk heroes The Dickies in monster costumes. The film is unusually light on blood 'n' guts, instead opting to highlight the endless prank wars between the male lead's slobby frat and those uptight fancy lads over at the Gamma Alpha Epsilon house (or "GAE" for short). Viewers will lose interest in deducing the killer's identity, but may remain riveted by the many moonings, bra-removals and even a scene where a sorority girl accidentally humps an elderly man's corpse. Whoops. (*ZC*)

THE RUTLES: ALL YOU NEED IS CASH

Dirs. Eric Idle & Gary Weis / 1978

This pseudo-documentary Beatles parody chronicles
the rise and fall of the "Pre-fab Four": Dirk, Nasty,
Stig and Barry, better known as The Rutles.



When I was 10, this was the funniest thing I'd ever seen. Some of the songs are pretty damn great ("Cheese and Onions"), and John Belushi triumphs as narcissistic rock promoter Ron Decline. Still, it's a union of *Saturday Night Live* and Monty Python (the brainchild of Eric Idle, it originated as a skit on *SNL* and British TV), and tries way too hard to get laughs. The lone punk moment comes near the end when Dirk McQuickly (Idle, in one of several roles, this one parodying Paul McCartney), in a "where-are-they-now" update, is said to have started a group called "The Punk Floyd." He's shown in full punk regalia, including a comically oversized safety pin through his nose, and hocks a huge loogie at the camera. With tons of cameos by *SNL* regulars Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Gilda Radner, as well as Ron Wood, a stoned Mick Jagger playing himself, George Harrison, Michael Palin, Bianca Jagger and Al Franken and Tom Davis as Decline's goons. This film gets extra credit for beating *This is Spinal Tap* to the punch. (*KK*)

NAGE
AD

SALVATION!

Dir. Beth B / 1987

A televangelist is treated poorly.

New York art-film veteran Beth B takes a shot at more accessible storytelling with this brazenly irreverent (and all-too-easy) slap to Christ's bearded face. Primetime holy man Reverend Randall (Stephen McHattie) is seduced, beaten and blackmailed by manic white trash family the Stamples (including X vocalist Exene Cervenka and her future real-life husband Viggo Mortensen). He struggles to escape their clutches, only to end up deeper in the proverbial soup. Eventually, Rhonda Stample (Cervenka) convinces him to let her co-host his program, introducing the bold concept of pro-Christ heavy metal. For her music video debut, she appears in a hot pink wig, chained to a giant, lightbulb-encrusted cross. She then saunters into a barroom full of sinners, among them one mohawked punk who gawks as if he can't believe he's staring at a venerable punk legend in a Madonna bra and Tina Turner wig. I'm right there with ya, pal... until the Satan dwarf shows up. Then I'm leaving. (*ZC*)

THE SATAN KILLER

Dir. Stephen Soyre (as Stephen Calomari) / 1993

A tough-as-nails cop tracks a crazy-as-shit lunatic.

This Virginia-made straight-to-video neck-snapper is unflinchingly filthy. The bare-bones cinematography and grim amateur performances are so legitimately ugly and *real* that the videotape almost reeks of stale beer and BO. Police detective Stephens (director Sayre) refuses to rest until he tracks down a phantom psychopath whom the media has named "The Satan Killer." This misogynistic motorcycle maniac is responsible for the death of Stephens' wife and countless others. Murder is just one of his hobbies; the unshaven lunatic shows no hesitation in committing any number of heinous crimes against humanity, such as when he shatters a glass bottle over a paraplegic's head in a crowded restaurant. But Stephens is fueled by an equal rage; he even takes a break from his vengeance quest to shoot an abusive pimp in the gut. The murder is witnessed by three alley-crawling crust punks who poke their spiked heads out of a darkened doorway just long enough to say "Fuck!"

The shoestring ambition here is incredible: live ammunition is used, actors perform their own stunts and an elderly private eye drops the word "motherfucker" like he's got ten minutes to live. This same character even refers to The Satan Killer as a "scum-suckin', motherfuckin', ball-bitin' death machine." The killings, rapes and gun battles are all ferocious, but none of them are as gruesome as the film's lone (and lengthy) consensual sex scene, where Stephens' ten-o-clock shadow grinds mercilessly against the female lead's breasts. (*ZC*)

SATISFACTION

Dir. Joan Freeman / 1988

A group of women with eternal moxie show us that mediocre bar rock is "not just boys' fun."

When a film centers on a band, there's a certain suspension of disbelief that must take place on the audience's part. Most people are not bothered by actors limply "playing" their instruments onscreen out of sync with the music on the soundtrack. For anyone who has an inkling of what it is to play in a band, the effect of an actor who's clearly not a musician has more of a bothersome, negative impact on the viewer. This is my call to actors to do their job: if you're going to play onscreen, wouldn't it be prudent to learn the rudimentary fundamentals of that instrument, so you don't look like an ape fondling a sabertooth's leg bone? The ladies of *Satisfaction* do an adequate job of pantomiming (with the exception of Julia "what-the-fuck-are-you-doing?" Roberts), however, since the songs sound completely produced by synthesizers and drum machines, the point is moot.

Jennie Lee (Justine Bateman) is the hapless, starry-eyed leader of group The Mystery. Her ambitious plans for fame include becoming the house band at a lame beach bar. The rest of the group needs to ditch this oversized cowbell-toting dud, and get sax-toting hunk Tim Cappello from *The Lost Boys* to front their band. Each member of The Mystery fits neatly into a type: the hussy, the wasteoid, the music nerd and the tomboy. Beyond their assigned traits, the characters are indistinguishable, excepting the male keyboard player. As each of them weathers the rocky road to stardom, they fall in and out of love, have inter-group tiffs and play lots of crappy music, including an abominable reggae version of "Mr. Big Stuff." During all this, Liam Neeson sits idly by, probably wondering how he got into a movie where he has to do a piano duet with Justine Bateman, whose singing voice should belong to a transvestite Tom Waits.

The film is certainly a mess, but an enjoyable one. Anytime a lull occurs, there's a montage to lift our spirits, including a fast-forward volleyball game! And during the opening credits, Jennie Lee weaves through a few excellent punkers on the street. She narrowly misses

a liberty-spiked skater who wears the old tried-and-true uniform of Converse All Stars and a leather jacket. The other punk extras are striking, as they're not your run-of-the-mill factory punks, but seem genuine in their appearance. Take the individual with the crimson red devil lock and tattered jean jacket, accompanied by a total Suicidal Tendencies skate rager wearing a sleeveless T-shirt and bandana around his head. Other tangential punk happenings occur at Jennie Lee's valedictorian speech, which sounds like she's reading it off the back of an anarchy symbol long sleeve from Hot Topic. Also, Bateman's wardrobe is consistently reminiscent of a mid-to-late '80s thrash band drummer, i.e. tight black T-shirts, jean shorts and sneakers. Was the dude from D.R.I. her fashion consultant? While *Satisfaction* is ultimately clunky, it has undeniable '80s charm. I mean, in what other decade could we have Julia Roberts playing sloppy bass? By the way, she's by far the laziest actress in the film, showing no semblance of what playing a bass entails, which brings up the question: is hard work relevant in Hollywood? As a smug and ignorant critic, I offer a resounding NO. *(SC)*

SAVAGE CITY: ANGEL DUST

Dir. Toru Murokawa / 1991

The gripping adventures of an unnecessarily suave Tokyo cop.

Officer Macki cruises the city streets in a red convertible, kissing women and intimidating criminals. He stops off at a club to see a girlfriend's pop band and watches spazzoids in studded leather dive off the stage to the family-safe beat. Later, he foils an impotent bank hold-up perpetrated by teenagers with Easter pastel new wave haircuts. In fact, this so-called "savage city" is just brimming with tepid punks, including members of a PCP-fueled gang ruled by a stoic beanpole whose only delight is his fuchsia-haired boyfriend. Macki is forced to face off with this crew in a hail of bullets and tilty camera angles. For the film's climax, every remaining convention of the crummy American action movie is adopted by a country of biologically superior people who are statistically smart enough to know better. *(ZC)*

SAVAGE STREETS

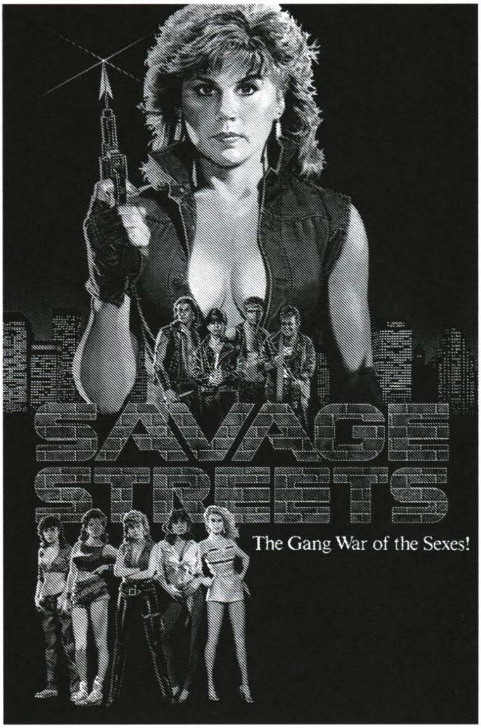
Dir. Danny Steinmann / 1984

Vengeance-starved teen Brenda (Linda Blair) declares war on the thugs who raped her sister.

Some films make you feel like scrubbing yourself with steel wool. This is a filthy, emotionally involving feature that, despite Blair's skintight leather vigilante wardrobe, evokes pure scum rather than languid sleaze. Like the era's other finest penis-shriveling anti-sexploitation films (*Angel*, *Vice Squad*), *Savage Streets* arouses misanthropy above all else. The only thing aroused here will be your suicidal impulse.

A four-man gang called The Scars terrorizes their fellow Los Angeles wretches, mostly through light beatings and empty threats. One sports a Damned logo on his vest, another a dangling cross earring. They wander onto the local high school campus, where the hard-as-iron principal (Mr. John Vernon) calls the square-jawed gang leader a "faggot" and recommends that he "go fuck an iceberg." They set their sights on Brenda and her friends, but when the gal pals won't give The Scars the time of day, they violate Brenda's deaf-mute kid sis Heather (Linnea Quigley). This scene is particularly jarring, as Quigley's silent scream and anguished expression will knock the air out of the most seasoned trash viewer. The heinous plan is executed by the film's central punk, milk-faced leatheroid Red (named after his signature hair dye, of course). His pre-rape pickup line: "I ain't never talked to no deaf chick before." This weaselly stereotype wears chains, studs, mascara, combat boots, splatter-bleached jeans and an assortment of band emblems stitched onto his immaculately torn outfit. He giggles and leers as his chums have their way with the girl.

Furious, Brenda declares that "the cops are a bunch of pussies," and sets out to get even. Things of course escalate, culminating in a truly shocking scene involving a pregnant teenager and a freeway overpass. Enough is enough … Brenda loads up on crossbows and bear traps and steels herself for maximum street combat.


SAVAGE STREETS
The Gang War of the Sexes!

The Runaways' lead singer Cherie Currie was set to play Brenda, but this fell through shortly before shooting. Production difficulties continued; the film was initially to be directed by former gay porn auteur Tom DeSimone, who had worked with Linda Blair on the slasher *Hell Night* three years earlier, but he quit without notice.

Steinmann was brought in and given little time to complete the feature. He was young and less experienced, but *Savage Streets* nevertheless managed to pull the most effective aspects of the then-wilting rape revenge genre and give it a fresh-yet-filthy new face. The victims are more human than helpless, the villains are ruthless but weak, and the steaming gutters of Hollywood threaten to open wide and swallow everyone straight into the sewer. (*ZC*)

SCANNERS III: THE TAKEOVER

Dir. Christian Duguay / 1992

A woman goes on a scanning spree
and only her brother can stop her.

A person with the power to scan (manipulate people with his mind) uses it to smack a woman's bottom, and then he entertains partygoers by moving a man in a Santa suit and forcing people to dance. There's no need to say that this is nothing like the original Cronenberg film. It has that late-night cable feel to it: nobody actors, synth soundtrack and a random sexy nurse scene. It's the type of film where people will suddenly break into martial arts for no good reason. Like *Rambo III*, the main character runs off to a monastery, here to escape the pain of killing a close friend. Unlike *Rambo III*, this film has an incredible underwater scanning fight. Some punks break into cars and are taught a lesson by being scanned into the back of a garbage truck. What's with the one's hair; spiked, long in back with lightning bolts shaved in the sides? Weird, but not as offensive as the female scanner in the *Blossom* hat. (*BC*)

SCARLET FRY'S HORRORAMA

Dir. Walter Reuther / 1990

An anthology film hosted by genuinely mysterious
terrormeister Scarlet Fry.

A shot-on-video movie that might be the greatest thing you've never seen. Its cheapness is both comical and endearing. Notice the blood spray in the "Manwich" segment. The actors are obviously the director's friends or people they just pulled off the street. This is mostly a horror film, but some segments deal with sensitive, real-life issues, such as the one where a man finds a gun in a trashcan and decides to shoot his girlfriend. The "Kiss Kiss Me New Wave Zombie" tale is about an old lady mourning in the graveyard who is attacked by a corpse wearing a skinny tie and a jacket with band pins on it. Slick Maggot is credited as doing post-production on this film. Who ARE these people? (*BC*)

SCARRED

Dir. Rose-Marie Turko / 1984

A teenage girl sells her body
to support her child.

Ruby (Jennifer Mayo) is a 16-year-old single mother/Hollywood prostitute. Though she's barely able to make ends meet, she refuses to work with the local pimp contingent. Eventually, she relents and ends up with white cowboy sugarpimp Easy, befriending his lead earner Carla in the process. Their johns range from daddy-role weirdos to rabid germophobes to a Phil Spector-esque megalomaniacal lunatic. After a beating from Easy, the ladies break off with Ruby's 2-year-old son, forging a near-family out of sheer emotional need. As the women relax in a field, Carla rationalizes their unconventional situation: "You know what I saw in a supermarket...a whole family of punk rockers. The baby and everything."

The two eventually drift apart and Ruby's self-destructive leanings manifest in a punk makeover. Her long hair is streaked deep red, she wears a studded leather jacket covered in band pins, and the ensemble is completed with futuristic mascara. The new looks bears a more confrontational attitude and turns bleached and spiked heads on Hollywood Blvd. After gunning down a particularly unhinged client on Halloween, Ruby escapes down the stairwell and busts through a shocked pack of garish new wavers. All of them are gooned up to the nines with one going the extra mile by sporting plastic Dracula fangs. She stumbles through streets littered with mutants and non-humans, some in rubber monster masks. Scattered among the panorama of goofballs are a few ogling punks, staring ahead with condemning emptiness.

With its suicides and drug use, *Scarred* is an emotionally grittier portrayal of streetwalking life than other films of its type. Entertainment paper *Variety* even complimented it by saying it was more realistic than successful hooker action-drama *Angel*. Despite its starkness, the ultimately humane story was brought to the screen partly due to help from the National Endowment for the Arts. Alex Cox acted as assistant director and played a small role in the film—credited as "Porno Stud"—before going on to complete *Repo Man*. Like that film, the soundtrack features several new wave tracks, though only *Scarred* can claim songs from Kim Fields (Tootie on squeaky-clean '80s sitcom *The Facts of Life*). Surprisingly, writer/director/producer Turko wouldn't go on to future film projects, except for assuming the false name "Allen Actor" to helm a section of sci-fi anthology turkey *The Dungeonmaster*. (*ZC*)

SCENES FROM THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN BEVERLY HILLS

Dir. Paul Bartel / 1989

Rich people hump each other and whine.

A desperately laughless ensemble piece from sometimes-brilliant filmmaker Bartel (*Death Race 2000; Private Parts*). Imagine *Porky's* as written by Evelyn Waugh, as the self-loathing acts of a philandering upper-class family mix with butt jokes and racist zings. Wallace Shawn, Ed Begley Jr. and Bartel's longtime best friend (and Warhol collaborator) Mary Woronov star, each shirtless at least once and playing below their considerable talents. Ray Sharkey is the sex-crazed bisexual butler, and wayward, terminally-ill teenager Willie (Barret Oliver) hobbles around despondently in his black wardrobe and noncommittal blow-dried mohawk. (*ZC*)

SCENES FROM THE GOLDMINE

Dir. Marc Rocco / 1987

A starry-eyed hopeful faces cold facts.

Catherine Mary Stewart plays Debi DiAngelo, an earnest keyboardist with attainably modest dreams of rock 'n' roll stardom. She joins up with Niles (*Valley Girl's* Cameron Dye) and earns an unwanted education in the ups and (mostly) downs of LA club life. The band's sound is brutally Caucasian AM radio rock, which makes sense considering many of the songs were penned by criminal ear-fucker Bryan Adams. Despite their nonfat take on music, Niles and Debi aren't afraid to wallow in the seedier corners of Hollywood, including an art-trash bar where hairless models are suspended from the ceiling in gauze bandages. The establishment's patrons are shrouded in shadows, but jagged haircuts and cubic fashions are hazily visible through the dimness. Later, a pink-haired woman passes a dual-hawked bruiser on a crowded sidewalk. But colorful peripheral scamps like these are soon a thing of the past as the band finds themselves flanked by coked-out industry millionaires, two of which are played by the great Steve Railsback and Fear madman Lee Ving. In the long-standing tradition of fictionalized rock dreams, narcotics and ego lead to failure and heartbreak, with a side of abortion. (*ZC*)

SCHOOL SPIRIT

Dir. Alan Holleb / 1985

A frat dude dies while trying to put a condom on.
His ghost comes back to pour yogurt on a man's head
and spy on co-eds taking showers.

There is a party scene where a girl has a black-and-white mohawk. The Gleaming Spires play some songs. A few other new wave styles can be spotted at this party, where they celebrate "Hog Day" by going on a Slip 'n Slide. This movie didn't win any awards. (BC)

SCREAM DREAM

Dir. Donald Farmer / 1989

The lead singer of a rock band is fired for practicing witchcraft, and the demon occupying her soul leaves to possess her replacement.

Those who rent *Scream Dream* on the strength of the video box will be pleased, as the director immediately offers up the gruesome events depicted on the cover. The artwork shows a blonde woman in lingerie tied spread-eagle to a bed with a big chainsaw slicing its way towards her crotch. I guess no one can accuse Donald Farmer of false advertising...even though I'm not sure what this scene has to do with the rest of the movie.

Michelle Shock (Carol Carr) is the charismatic singer of "hard rock" band Rikk-O-Shay. Her look is half metal and half gothic with a wee pinch of punk. She's by no means a "pure" punk, but her name, safety pins and chains certainly proclaim a punk attitude. Too bad her music totally sucks, and it's honestly a stretch to even call it rock 'n' roll. Anyway, not only does she dress evil, she IS evil. Shock practices witchcraft and is (ulp!) possessed by a demon. The guys in the band figure it out and fire her, replacing Shock with a blonde bimbo named Jamie (Melissa Moore, former *Playboy* Playmate turned "actress"). In one hilarious scene, Jamie stumbles upon Shock's dead body and decides to taste her blood, thus becoming infected by the same demon! Rikk-O-Shay's popularity grows, but so does Jamie's propensity to turn into an ugly supernatural beast and kill people. Her funny-looking, longhaired boyfriend/bandmate (Nikki Riggins) eventually sorts it out...or was it all a dream? A Scream Dream!!!

Amusing Tennessee accents, awesomely primitive optical effects, a short running time, several rubbery demons and lots of unbearable music make *Scream Dream* a must-see for fans of shot-on-video horror films. (*SH*)

SCREEN TEST

Dir. Sam Auster / 1985

A group of friends decide the best way to get laid is
to cast hot chicks for a nonexistent adult film.

Not your average '80s sex comedy, solely because of the creative usage of sexual imagery. A dog shows up in S&M gear. In an adult novelty store, the employees are Siskel and Ebert impersonators who critique a fake vibrating vagina. One of the main characters is convinced that he'll get cancer if he doesn't lose his virginity. He should be more concerned about trimming and maintaining his eyebrows. He seriously looks like Bert from *Sesame Street*. I mean Christ, it looks like fake mustaches are stuck on his forehead.

The trademark chubby slob character fantasizes about bathing in a hot tub filled with sausage. Later on, this fatty runs for his life while eating a bucket of chicken. He cleverly pretends to be a statue, successfully fooling the goombas in tow. Sadly, a black man smells the chicken and gives away his clever trick. Wait! That's not the end of the gag. The black man also speaks Italian! During the process of making the fake porn film, the guys base important decisions on the divining forces of a giant double-ended dildo. A half-assed punk attends their porn audition, dressed in Indian war paint, stud necklace and black lipstick. There's a "Punk Girl" character listed in the end credits, but is nowhere to be seen in the film. Things turn sensitive and drag in the end...no more sex, just people "making love" to slow introspective music. Still, the dirty humor is not totally forgotten; when the finished porno is shown on television, it's so erotic that it makes men have sex with fat broads and even turns on 7-year-olds, who decide to experiment during naptime. (*BC*)

SCRUBBERS

Dir Mai Zetterling / 1982

A dramatic slice-of-life at a British women's prison.

George Harrison executive produced this non-exploitative look at the UK's female detention centers. Carol, an escaped teenage convict, drives a stolen truck through an apartment building in a calculated attempt to join her girlfriend Doreen in a maximum security prison. Her heart breaks when she finds that Doreen is now romantically involved with one of the ragged group led by the butch, leather-clad Eddie. Another member of the she-mob is Molly, a loudmouthed goofball with wild bleached hair.

Glue-sniffing, fire hose assaults, self-mutilation, dirty limericks and bath scenes don't keep this from being a respectable, artful women-in-prison film. Violence and homosexuality are represented as natural conditions of the center and its inhabitants, and never capitalized on. It could be compared to the great Australian prison picture *Ghosts of the Civil Dead*, but *Scrubbers* is ultimately more emotionally grounded and sympathetic to its characters. Though there's no escaping the bleakness of its central subject, there are several less bleak—even fun—moments, including when the prisoners put on a new wave performance in striped trash bags and black lipstick. The film was co-written by Roy Minton, who had also penned Alan Clarke's borstal drama *Scum* in the late '70s. (*ZC*)

SECOND TIME LUCKY

Dir. Michael Anderson / 1984

Through the ages with Adam and Eve, starstruck lovers.

Snore! Boo! Waah! Fast-forward to the new wave parts or don't watch it at all. It starts with the couple in the Garden of Eden, then moves to Roman Times, World War I, gangster days, and finally at the age of punk. Eve (Diane Franklin) shows off a lot of skin. I guess you could fast-forward to those parts too, if you're lonely. In the modern bit, Adam has blue and red highlights in his hair. He wears a dog collar and has a reader board that says "Damn mad." His face is painted white and he sings "Radioactive Tears." The big record company wants him to perform something more pro-nuclear, so he quickly cleans up his act. He loses his torn clothes and slicks his hair down. Check out his backup band; one of the members looks like a bald substitute teacher that the producers dressed up to look new wave. One funny joke: God wears a shirt with a big letter "G" on it. Hey, wait, that joke isn't funny. My mistake. (*BC*)

THE SECRET OF MY SUCCESS

Dir. Herbert Ross / 1987

Michael J. Fox plays a farmboy who moves to the big city and uses his unlimited reserve of greed to lie, cheat, and steal his way to the top of a huge New York corporation.

A tribute to the '80s greed aesthetic and how corporate success is analogous to the triumph of the human spirit. Brantley Foster (Fox) connives, boffs and deceives his way to the top, and the film paints him as plucky for all his misdeeds. He sleeps with the boss' wife (who also happens to be his aunt), lies to everyone he comes in contact with and garners the American Dream as a result, meaning he finds love and wealth. As such, Brantley is a difficult character to sympathize with: a gleam in his eye and a can-do attitude help further his money-grubbing opportunism. So what?

Thankfully, at least one real human is in this film; a mohawked individual wearing a Cramps T-shirt hangs out during the opening montage, thus establishing how "far out" and frightening New York City is. However, the corporate culture presented in the film is far more confounding, alienating and horrifying than any counterculture hairdo could ever be. (*SC*)

SENSELESS

Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1998

Darryl Witherspoon (Marlon Wayans) becomes a human lab rat and gets injected with a green glowing liquid that magnifies his senses.

That's right. Spheeris made a fart comedy with a Wayans. Witherspoon uses his super-sight to zoom in on a girl's rump. His super-hearing allows him to listen to gays talking dirty and a woman going to the bathroom. The funniest part in the movie really is the extended ass-itching scene, not to be confused with the extended crotch-punching scene. The usually obnoxious Matthew Lillard is obnoxious as usual. As straight-edge comic relief Tim LaFlour, he wears a jacket with a Misfits patch and has a chain going from his penis to his scrotum. In some scenes, he wears a Naked Aggression T-shirt. When Witherspoon gets depressed he goes to the local punk hangout. A girl with liberty spikes helps him study and eventually makes out with LaFlour. The bulk of the soundtrack is by Yello. Look at the year this film was made and read that last sentence again. (*BC*)

SERIAL MOM

Dir. John Waters / 1994

A loving mother takes on a new hobby.

The Sutphins are a normal family who live a normal life; the kids are in school, dad's a dentist and mom takes care of things at home. All is well until people start "offending" them, and begin to turn up dead. But who could be doing horrible things? Is it their son, Chip? True...he does like those horror movies. Is it darling daughter Misty? Everyone knows that chubby teens go crazy when the boy of their dreams turns them down for a skinny girl. Well, it certainly couldn't be their loving, kind and helpful mother...could it?

Serial Mom is one of Waters' more commercially accessible films, even though some of the content is downright foul. He's spoken of his lifelong obsession with serial killers and cinematic courtroom trials, both of which he brought into this film project. He's also made his love for punk music known, and showcases a variety of subculture audience extras when the band L7 performs as "Camel Toe" at the movie's climactic chase scene. The mostly great cast features Sam Waterston, Kathleen Turner, Traci Lords, Ricki Lake, world-class asshole Matthew Lillard, Waters regular Mink Stole and Patty Hearst as the unlucky juror who makes the ultimate fashion faux pas. (*JH*)

SEVEN MINUTES IN HEAVEN

Dir. Lester Jordan / 1986

Horny female flatmates in midtown Manhattan attempt
to seduce their seemingly sexually aloof girlfriend.

This is another film starring professional new wave mattressback Jeanna Fine. While she definitely has the look down, I didn't sense much punk attitude in her performance. I doubt the filmmakers were particularly interested in developing the cultural side of Fine's character, as they seem much more interested in exploring her vagina. *Seven Minutes* was made when the adult *film* industry shifted into the adult *video* industry and unflattering upgraded technology replaced the somewhat tasteful colors of celluloid. In other words, you can now clearly see the pimples on everybody's asses. Also dropped were complicated plots or creative storytelling; basically, you get a general setup to put some horny people together in the same place and let them get wild. In this case, the story is about roommates Irene (Fine) and Glenda (Siobhan Hunter), who are visited at their Manhattan apartment by their old friend Heaven (Nina Preta). Heaven doesn't have much interest in Irene and Glenda's fuck-filled lives but, as you probably derived from the title, a creepy guy eventually spends seven minutes in heaven. (*SH*)

SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

Dir. Michael Schultz / 1978

A celluloid funeral for '60s rock.

George "God" Burns is the narrator and only redeeming component of the most misguided musical of the '70s. Peter Frampton and The Bee Gees inexplicably play the titular combo, small-town boys who fall victim to the pitfalls of a vampiric record industry. Nearly the entire film is told in shitty reinterpretations of Beatles songs, including a synthesized version of "Mean Old Man" pumped out by wig-wearin' robots as rainbow-haired urchins prance in front of a video arcade. The degeneration of the band's hometown is apparent via the increasing number of disco sexpots and new wave trash prowling the streets. See Steve Martin, Alice Cooper, Donald Pleasence and many other respected entertainers peel off their dignity like a week-old sunburn. (*ZC*)

SHADEY

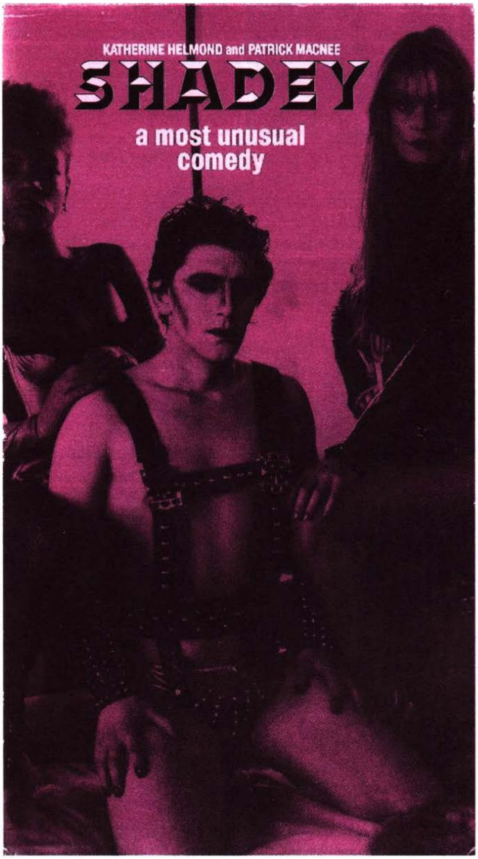
Dir. Philip Saville / 1985

A clairvoyant is discovered by a wealthy businessman
that attempts to manipulate the youth's powers for
his own nefarious uses.

Oliver Shadey (Antony Sher) can read minds and manifest his visions onto celluloid merely by pressing a regular 8mm film camera to his temple. Somehow, word of this ability is leaked from the processing lab to a powerful businessman, who recruits Mr. Shadey to use for his own gain. Shadey agrees, but under two conditions: that the information he provides the business man's "research team" with isn't used for military ends (which you know they're going to be), and that he wants a sex change. The ensuing scenes towards achieving his surgery are somewhat surreal, culminating in a dream-like knifing incident in the kitchen that produces some very real results.

Shadey is kidnapped by baddies who've caught wind of his supernatural abilities. It's this fork in the movie that yields punks. Three attend an outdoor political rally, each with panderingly distinctive hair colors.

As with any "clairvoyantsploitation" flick worth its weight, there are good guys and bad guys struggling for possession of the magical man, who in turn is able to take advantage of his popularity to get what she wants. Sometimes it's hard to tell who's who, but that's all part of the fun. The film was written by Snoo Wilson, who didn't have another film produced for over two decades. This isn't worth mentioning besides the fact that the man's name is Snoo. (*BI*)


KATHERINE HELMOND and PATRICK MACNEE
SHADEY
a most unusual comedy

SHE

Dir. Avi Nesher / 1982

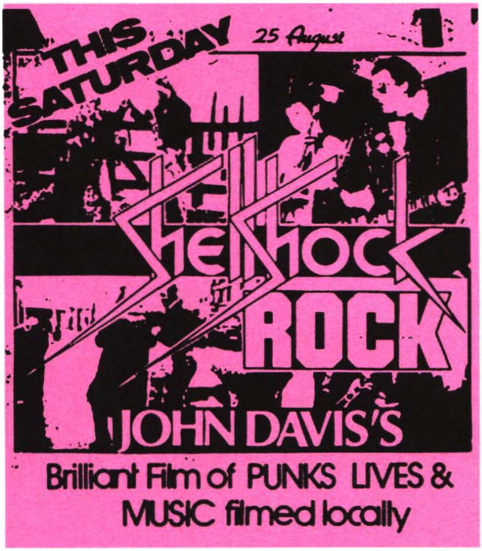
A trio of fighters roams a scorched Earth.

Lady warrior Sandahl Bergman shot down her chances at a post-*Conan* career with this spiral into post-atomic retardation loosely based on the classic novel by H. Rider Haggard. The actress plays She, a sword-toting, gender separatist battlequeen ruling a fierce amazon tribe in the nuclear wastelands. In her travels with two unlikely (read: male) companions she encounters cave-dwelling mutants, bacchanalian werewolves, a telekinetic man-god and even a sex-starved elderly horticulturist. This long path leads to her reckoning with vicious wasteoid clan the Norks, a warlike people evidently weaned on gladiator legends and showy punk fashion. One Nork guardsman stands out as particularly enterprising, with bright studded leathers clashing with his single long, proud day-glo liberty spike. Other assembled soldiers seem to have lazily spray-painted their heads to gain entry into the warrior elite, but they all pay in blood at the film's climax when a bearded fat man in a pink tutu appears for absolutely no reason. Features the best hand-drawn opening credit sequence in VHS history and soundtrack work by Motörhead and Rick Wakeman. (*ZC*)

SHELLSHOCK ROCK

Dir. John T. Davis / 1979

Punk infests Ireland.



Davis' document of the Belfast scene covers an impressive amount of ground, leaving viewers feeling like they've slept through a major chapter in cultural history. Sure, punk had taken hold on multiple continents by the time of this film's production, but to see it so richly established in the otherwise underexplored Irish subculture is fascinating...as long as you can navigate the impenetrable accents. The street youths are almost indistinguishable from British scene kids, though fashion flash is at a minimum, seemingly exchanged for a surplus of optimism and energy. Everyone involved seems genuinely empowered by the music itself, from hometown heavies The Undertones, Stiff Little Fingers and The Outcasts to less widely celebrated acts Protex and The Xposers. The bands all perform for packed crowds at The Harp Bar or occasionally just in their practice spaces, some members offering their personal reasons for dedicating themselves to the punk lifestyle. A well-balanced look at an inspiring scene, though clearly the exuberance of Ireland's punk youth didn't reach everyone; when asked her opinion of the movement, a middle-aged Belfast woman replies, "I could give a screw." (*ZC*)

SHEPHERD

Dir. Peter Hayman / 1999

An unexciting title for an even less exciting movie.

Low budget horror is easy to pull off. All one needs is some regular folk, fake blood and/or a rubber monster. Low budget sci-fi is a little harder to do, and if you're aiming to make a *Blade Runner* type film with a hundred bucks, it's gonna look like crap. Enter *Shepherd*. C. Thomas Howell plays default hero Boris, and is already well into his rapidly-developing smoker's voice. If watching the star of *Soul Man* bone a girl in a church sounds interesting to you, then check this flick out.

David Carradine shows up in a club where crappy '90s punks jam to the futurebeats. There are many clumsy fight scenes and much unnecessary slow motion. At one point, Carradine does a Brando impression. Punks beat up a desk clerk and get high. One asks Boris if he wants to "suck the devil's dick." A man with spiked hair and a dog collar wants to cook a woman's son and eat him. Listen to this man's accent and please tell me where the fuck he's from. "Rowdy" Roddy Piper gets a thankless role, doesn't fight and probably put more effort into cashing his check than he did his performance. Uh oh...in one part a naked woman reports the evening news! Oh, you silly future, you. (BC)

SHE'S OUT OF CONTROL

Dir. Stan Dragoti / 1989

Doug Simpson (Tony Danza) is a gold-hearted single dad
who goes blind with rage when his bookish daughter
transforms into the Statue of Puberty.

Much of Danza's screen career has been spent with primate co-stars, like the orangutans and Danny DeVito in *Going Ape*. In this case, the affable Italian allies with Monkees daughter Ami Dolenz, whose character sheds her adolescent nerd skin in favor of a very timely *Saved by the Bell* aesthetic. This look is enough to drive every man on Earth wild, as each possible male stereotype arrives on the family doorstep: nerds, metalheads, twins, overdeveloped jocks, junior businessmen and every parent's nightmare in the form of a punk teen complete with a spiky black mohawk. The rest of the film centers on dear ol' dad desperately struggling to maintain his daughter's virginity, with several unpleasant shots of him nervously assessing her developing breasts. To Danza's credit, he really uses this film to expand his breadth as an actor...meaning that, for the first time, his character is named something other than "Tony." (*ZC*)

SHE'S SO FINE

Dir. Henri Pachard / 1985

On her wedding day, a young bride begins to question her impending marriage as her guests and relatives begin coupling off and getting it on!

This domestic hump epic was made at the very end of the shot-on-film era of adult movies. The porn industry was making a rapid transition to video, but director Pachard stayed true to the old school and shot this sex-drama on celluloid utilizing actual film school techniques like plot, character, dramatic resolution and big hairy bushes. But who cares about historical relevance cuz this movie features a raunchy, horny, beer-guzzling, fuck-happy, bisexual, foul-mouthed, sassy punk chick in a prominent supporting role.

After a montage establishing a suburban Detroit setting, the film lays out the events leading up to young Angela's (Taija Rae) marriage. First an old studly boyfriend of Angela's shows up, and then some of the groom's "artist" friends start ringing the doorbell. Into the mix arrives George, a weird guy in a ruffled shirt and a wig who explains that he's a musician and this is how his manager tells him to dress. At first Mom's afraid that he is going to be her new son-in-law, but soon Mom and George engage in some stress-relieving sexual intercourse. Next, seriously punk Twikki shows up. She's got a leather jacket, spiky hair, new wave makeup, chains, a handcuff belt, an unquenchable thirst for booze and a baaad attitude. Twikki demands beer and Roger takes her next door to retrieve some cold suds. But beer isn't the only thing this lustful punk is after, and the sexually aggressive Twikki is soon performing mouth tricks. She sticks her finger up the guy's ass and calls him a "pisshead." When Roger's wife shows up, Twikki kicks him out and the two ladies get busy. Back at Angela's, everybody has pretty much paired up every imaginable way and, after a couple of guys have ejaculated on her back, the young bride-to-be decides marriage isn't for her and burns her wedding gown in an oil drum. The End. (*SH*)

SHOCK 'EM DEAD

Dir. Mark Freed / 1991

A schmuck uses black magic to become a heavy metal icon.

This shredding supernatural thriller opens with fictitious rockers Spastique Colon busting out an agonizing rendition of "Purple Haze." Meanwhile, terminally nerdish pizza boy Martin (Stephen Quadros) stares through a pepperoni-shaped peephole to watch his busty coworker change into her uniform. He's promptly fired by the owner (the prodigious Aldo Ray), rejected as a guitarist for Spastique Colon and punched in the stomach by his trailer park landlord. At the end of his rope, Martin visits a limping voodoo priestess and asks to be transformed into the greatest rock star in the world. She thrusts a mystic blade into his sternum, causing him to experience a nightmarish rock-n-roll zombie hallucination. He awakens with immaculate glam hair in a zebra-striped mansion, complete with live-in groupies. Martin dons a TSOL shirt, returns to Spastique Colon's practice space, humiliates the band (including halter top-sporting vocalist Johnny Crack, who rocks nearly as hard as Liberace) and secures his position as their lead axeman. Returning to his swanky headquarters, he learns that his rock concubines are "soul vampires"...and so is he.

MARTIN: Are you telling me I have to kill to survive?

SATANIC GROUPIE: Yeah. You got screwed.

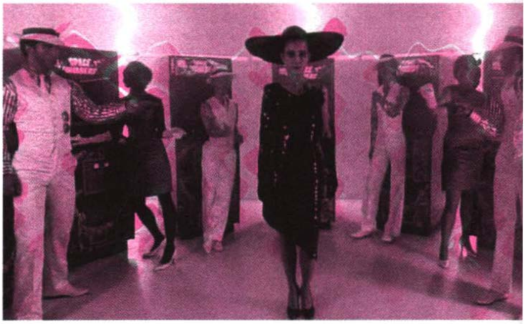
Mired in the tendrils of dark sorcery, Martin spirals out of control, killing innocent people and stealing pizzas from his former workplace. He's even affected on stage, as he punctuates the band's breakthrough gig by vomiting down a girl's cleavage. A barely-discernible punk cheers him on from the crowd. At the show, Johnny Crack wears a sash, gauntlet, giant hoop earring, kneepads and red jazzercise leotard with what looks like a Twinkie shoved down his crotch, but is nevertheless upstaged by Martin's devil-fueled performance tactics.

Quadros is fantastic in the film's lead role, but the VHS box art and most of Academy Entertainment's promotions would have you expect Traci Lords to be the story's focus. She adequately portrays Lindsay, an angel-hearted potential victim of rock's demonic excesses, and gives less screentime and gusto to the proceedings than many of the movie's "lesser" stars. Though he likely only spent a few hours on set, the movie's greatest thrill is Aldo Ray giving his exploitation best at this late stage of the game, just months before his death. Through four full decades and countless roles, Ray maintained his skills as a likeable heavy with genuine skill as a performer. Some lament the actor's last shots in direct-to-video hokum like *Shock 'n'Em Dead*, but he'd already sunk considerably lower in the late '70s appearing (fully dressed) in hardcore porn film *Bad Girls of the West.* So lay off and let a hard-working exploitation maverick rest in peace. Mr. Ray, you were a true king. (*ZC*)

SHOCK TREATMENT

Dir. Jim Sharman / 1981

The further adventures of Brad & Janet Majors.

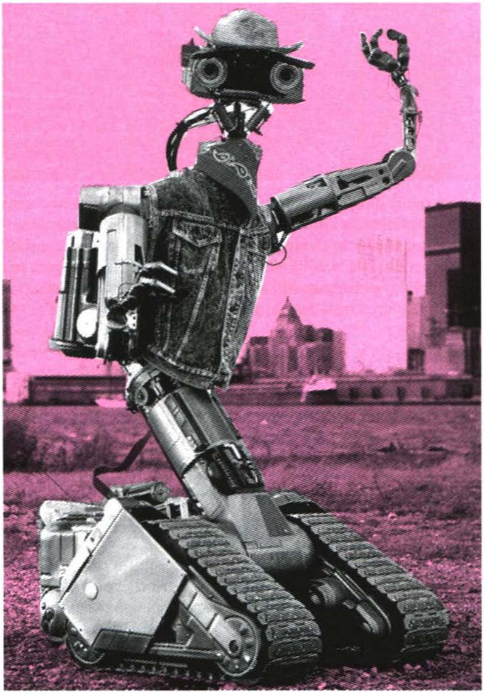


Richard "Riff Raff" O'Brien's neonized sequel to *Rocky Horror Picture Show* is an error in primary colors. A corrupt TV station creates a contented public fed on the network's processed content. A game-show host has Brad committed so the insidious station president can transform Janet into the latest fad. As part of her unveiling, the studio audience is treated to "the suburban garage sound" of clean-cut, white-suited youths Oscar Drill & the Bits. The seven-kid band tosses out a UK-style power pop anthem with enough urgency and militant stance to marginally qualify their segment as punk, not to mention that their song is the least painful number on the film's soundtrack. Brad's captors at the asylum are played by O'Brien and his returning screen partner Patricia "Magenta" Quinn, one of the few cast members from the last film to give cabaret-tinted humiliation a second shot. Fortunately, this sugarcoated, color-saturated visual stomachache was a massive failure, sparing us the agony of a second timeless prancy subcultural phenomenon. (*ZC*)

SHORT CIRCUIT 2

Dir. Kenneth Johnson / 1988

Lovable robot Johnny 5 comes to the big city and gets caught up in his friend Ben's toy-making enterprise.



This film reprises Fisher Stevens' tan-face role as East Indian inventor Ben Jahrvi. At the beginning of the picture, Ben is selling miniature Johnny 5s at a flea market. Among his customers is a youth with a bleach-blond mohawk. When our robot buddy gets beaten to near-death, he retaliates by working out, getting a mohawk/earchain combo and kicking some serious ass. No matter how terrible you think this movie is, PLEASE sit through it long enough to see this sequence. He learns the intimidation value of dressing punk from earlier in the movie, when he sees two guys with mohawks and calls them "human porcupines." Be warned: the gang-beating of Johnny is fairly intense for a children's film. No—scratch that—it's absolutely terrifying. See Johnny get pounded so hard he bleeds oil. He then dabs his metallic finger in it and writes "I'm dying" on the nearest wall. The death of Bambi's mother has nothing on this scene. (*BC*)

SHORT TIME

Dir. Gregg Champion / 1990

An unlikeable cop goes kamikaze so his needy family can cash in on his life insurance policy.

Police detective Burt Simpson (Dabney Coleman) is misdiagnosed with a rare disease when a pot-smoking bus driver switches their urine samples. Believing he has just two weeks to live, Simpson decides his best option is to die in the line of duty. What follows is a funny and surprisingly violent series of criminal confrontations and outrageous car chases, punctuated with Harold Lloyd-esque segments of cartoonish self-endangerment. Matt "Max Headroom" Frewer plays his bewildered partner, and Teri Garr is the estranged but devoted wife. In one scene, Simpson walks into a convenience store in only his underwear to foil a bomber. The hostages include two knee-knocking punks. Their friend with purple liberty spikes waits anxiously outside. Everything leads up to a four-star self-destructive action sequence, making this the most delightful suicide/fatal disease romp you'll see all year. (*ZC*)

SHOWDOWN

Dir. Robert Radler / 1993

An extremely toned school janitor teaches a student how to beat people into a coma.

Undisputed Tae-bo master Billy Blanks is Billy (!), an ex-cop repenting for his errors by sweeping high school hallways crammed with junior lowlifes. Staring emptily through the sea of zits is a trio of tragically '90s mall punks, the most entertaining of which wears a drab gray sweater that clashes with his melted-Crayolas hair. Written in Sharpie across his chest: "KILL YOURSELF." New student Ken arrives to a storm of hatred from a nerd-smacking territorial jock tyrant, and Billy is forced is to train the young victim in the art of not-getting-hit-in-the-face. He does so by having him mop floors and scrub walls, much like in that one movie where an older janitor who's secretly a martial arts expert teaches ***KARATE*** to a bullied ***KID***...but I can't remember that film's name at the moment. (*ZC*)

SHREDDER ORPHEUS

Dir. Robert McGinley / 1989

Musicians (yecccch) and artists (bleccccch) battle an evil corporation (yawwwwn).

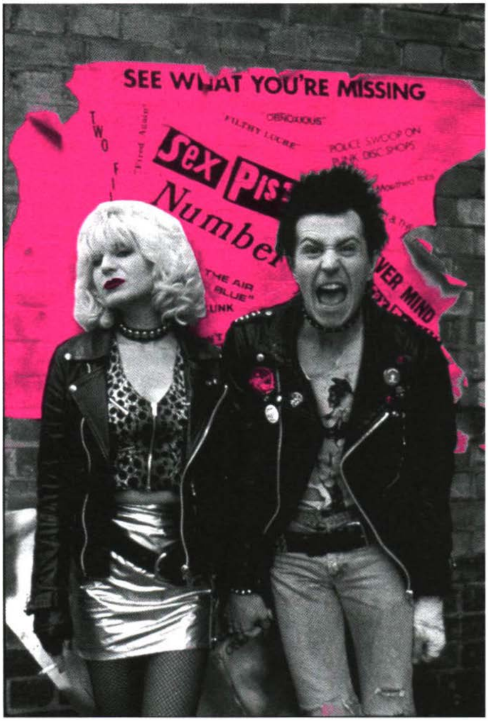
This slam poetry sci-fi musical is an unwatchable adaptation of the Greek fable *Orpheus & Eurydice*, pitting modern characters of the same names against an insidious, Hades-controlled TV network. Though intellectually draining and irritating at all levels, this severely modest Seattle production is not without its notable points. Well, one anyway: the film's ranting paraplegic narrator is played by Steven Jesse Bernstein, a short-lived legend of the Northwest literary scene who'd record a well-regarded spoken-word album on Sub Pop three years later, which would be released shortly after he had taken his own life. This film likely had nothing to do with his suicide, but if it did, no one could blame him. Bernstein is one of an army of homeless future skateboard youths living in a jungle of cargo containers and struggling for survival. One of the other filth-caked shipyard denizens is a spiky-haired quasi-mute who bangs on trashcans to express himself. The film's post-apocalyptic Rebels vs. Vampiric Media plot yields a surprisingly sparse punk count, with near-misses including a blue-haired hippie and other pathetically diverse urchins. (*ZC*)

SID & NANCY

Dir. Alex Cox / 1986

Two punk junkies waste away while shooting smack.

Man, junkies are boring. And filmmakers love to convey that boredom with the endless cyclical routine of a junkie: cop, shoot, cop. *Sid & Nancy* tells the tale of Sex Pistols "bassist" Sid Vicious (Gary Oldman) and his tumor of a girlfriend, Nancy Spungen (Chloe Webb). The clothes are punk, the decade is the '70s, but everything else is pure drug-addiction-of-the-week formula.



Typical of biopics, the characters in *Sid & Nancy* are generalities, containing one specific character trait to define their place in the story. As Vicious is the focus of the film, the other members of the Sex Pistols and the punk scene in general become a generic, fuzzy backdrop for his drug-addled antics. The re-creations of the band's music and performances diffuse any of the urgency or importance the band had at the time. Of course, that may be the point, as the film envelops us in Sid and Nancy's junkie vacuum, where heroin smears the outside world into abstraction. If that was the intent, the work is successful. Director Cox (who has himself stated he was dissatisfied with the film) certainly conveys the pointlessness of the junkie's existence.

Once the Sex Pistols break up and exit the film, the movie crawls. As junkies are boring, they make for boring subjects. Both Sid and Nancy are wasteoids, and their domestic scenes together contain either violent caterwauling (Chloe Webb's specialty; she's off the charts, like a shrieking ghoul) or blank numbness. Repeat ad infinitum. The film becomes a deadening grind as Sid slowly rots, Nancy dies and Sid rots some more, leading to the inevitable conclusion: Sid eating pizza in an industrial wasteland and then disco dancing with some kids and their ghetto blaster.

So the ending's good, at least. Any real color onscreen comes from the punks that come and go. The two highlights are the pirate-influenced rocker in the opening wearing an eyepatch and a skull T-shirt, and the baby with a green mohawk. Other than that, you get typical '77 style punx, whose fashion has inspired generations of decade-impaired mall vermin to wear bondage pants and listen to Rancid. (*SC*)

SIDEBURNS

Dir. Yuri Momin / 1990

A dark satire about fascistic and reactionary leaders holding sway over a small Russian city, attempting to eliminate all Western influence from their homeland.

The city of Zaborsk is home to two rival teenage gangs. Each gang draws its members from the young and excited citizens eagerly exploring their newfound freedoms as the Soviet Union falls to pieces around them. "Capella" is a diverse group of punks and hippies losing themselves to a world of Western clichés, graphic displays of public sexuality, wild parties, performance art pieces and provocative free-form happenings. They are routinely harassed and beaten by "Bashers," a gang of monosyllabic skinhead bodybuilders. Into this uneasy scene come two young men dressed in imitation of their idol, the 19th-century writer Aleksandr Pushkin, often considered Russia's greatest poet. They claim to offer a "social cleaning service" to eradicate "the scum of Western influence" and proceed to indoctrinate and recruit the Bashers to their cause. They make use of the gang's brute strength to suppress all opposition. The film examines the way in which people who are unaware in uncertain times can easily be led by charismatic types into dictatorial societies. The film presents no alternatives to this endless cycle of totalitarianism, merely suggesting that the same influences will reappear again and again hidden under different guises. In one particularly revealing scene, one of the Pushkinites is shown transforming a sculpture of Lenin into a sculpture of

Pushkin just by adding a small bit of clay. Director Mamin claims that his goal was "to make people laugh at reality before they die of horror." (*TS*)

SINCERELY CHARLOTTE

Dir. Caroline Huppert / 1985

When it comes to love, men are stupider than women…
or maybe this particular guy is just really dumb.

Our tale starts out in a seedy French nightclub filled with Euro new wavers, punks and all-purpose nasty Parisian trash, dancing their little booties off to stylish chanteuse Charlotte. The next day, she reintroduces herself into the life of ex-lover Mathieu, who appears to be a nice guy with a fiancée who adores him. Years before, Charlotte left him for no reason, so of course he now makes the decision to ruin his life for her, despite endless interactions like this one:

MATHIEU: Why did you leave me?

CHARLOTTE: Because I don't love you.

By the end, his life in shambles, Mathieu watches her roll away on a train. He's left at the platform, still a big dumb French guy in love with someone who doesn't give a shit. (*JH*)

SING

Dir. Richard J. Baskin / 1989

The students and staff of a Brooklyn high school face adversity
as they stage their annual variety show.

Like some sort of mad scientist, Dean Pitchford combined his formidable talents and created this obscure rock musical. Though the film was directed by Baskin (whoever the hell that is), this flick is Pitchford's baby as he wrote the script and music, in addition to helping choreograph the fancy footwork. Among other achievements, he wrote the screenplay for *Footloose*, composed the song "Fame" from the movie of the same title and is a big-time choreographer. Now take a second and imagine the ultimate movie by a guy like this and—blammo—you probably came up with something along the lines of *Sing*, a corny musical that's a lot like *Footloose* and *Fame*. *Sing* also borrows some thematic elements from the Garland/Rooney canon, cribs some scenes from *Flashdance* and takes a page or two from that Nick Nolte movie *Teachers*.

A Brooklyn high school hosts an annual student talent show called "Sing." Ms. Lombardo (a pre-*Goodfellas* Lorraine Bracco) coerces an Italian punk named Dominic (Peter Dobson) into participating in the production. Dominic isn't a punk in the "punk rock" sense nor is he a punk in the "has sex in prison" sense; rather, he's of the street tough variety, with his thuggish leather jacket and propensity to commit petty crimes. One fellow student wears a Flock of Seagulls haircut, while other students have feathered, spiky hairdos, and scattered about in the background are a few extras who are meant to appear punkish. Heck, even Bracco's haircut has a new wavey, androgynous '80s look to it. As the students and staff prepare for the upcoming concert, a rotten board member wants to cancel the big show. Will the students be able to make "Sing" happen? Will the evil school board guy triumph? You can probably guess, but if not, track down a copy of Dean Pitchford's masterwork and find out for yourself. (*SH*)

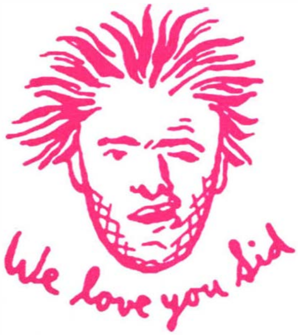
SIR DRONE

Dir. Raymond Pettibon / 1989

"I've never wanted anything more than to be a punk rocker…"

One of the four features from graphic artist Pettibon's single glorious year of video filmmaking, during which he collaborated with Dave Markey, Sonic Youth and countless other creatively-driven friends. *Sir Drone's* first shot is of Dwayne (Minutemen bassist Mike Watt) applying mascara above his safety-pinned cheek. We're introduced to the other half of his band, Jinx (Mike Kelley), while the pair jumps along to a punk tape in their briefs. They've moved to Hollywood to make it, but instead spend their time bickering because longhaired Jinx's guitar "won't play new wave." They head to a club for a double-bill of The Dils and The Scumpuppies, finding equal measures of inspiration and desperation through their social stumblings at the show. Back at their studio apartment, they decide the band name Abraham Lincoln Youth Brigade just doesn't cut it, but proposed replacements like Revolting Travolta, Gigantor in Bondage and The Man from Kunkle fall equally flat. After rehearsing, they give each other agonizing prison tattoos: "Do a swastika!"

In a manic state of creative exaltation, Dwayne runs to the window, leans out and yells, "Poseur!!!" When asked who he screamed at, he replies, "Just some poseur." He then dangles the radio out the same window because he can't get any punk on it. After a moment's hesitation, he chickens out and just spits on it instead.



And so on. Pettibon's parody of the rabid non-innovators of punk is one of the funniest movies on VHS. Watt and Kelley's acting goes beyond talent and straight into genius; their characters' codependent, impotent hostility towards one another makes them the best comedy team of the '80s, even if their partnership lasted only one film. (*ZC*)

SKATEBOARD MADNESS

Dir. Julian Pena / 1980

A quasi-documentary on the early '80s California skating scene.

The film kicks off with an agonizingly long psychedelic claymation fantasy sequence, then introduces us to Mello Cat, a skate mag reporter assigned to cover the fresh moves at an SF competition. Legend Stacy Peralta is among the main entrants. Low on the titular "madness," the doc eventually degenerates into heaps of slow-motion footage, sparse gags and aimless travel sequences. Narrated by Phil Hartman, who wrote his own script for the film in which he mentions Santa Monica skaters "hobnobbing with punks and drunks." The Surf Punks show up to knock out their lazy locals-only anthem "My Wave" in a studio performance spruced up with Devo glasses and stoner antics. Directed by the key grip of *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*. (*ZC*)

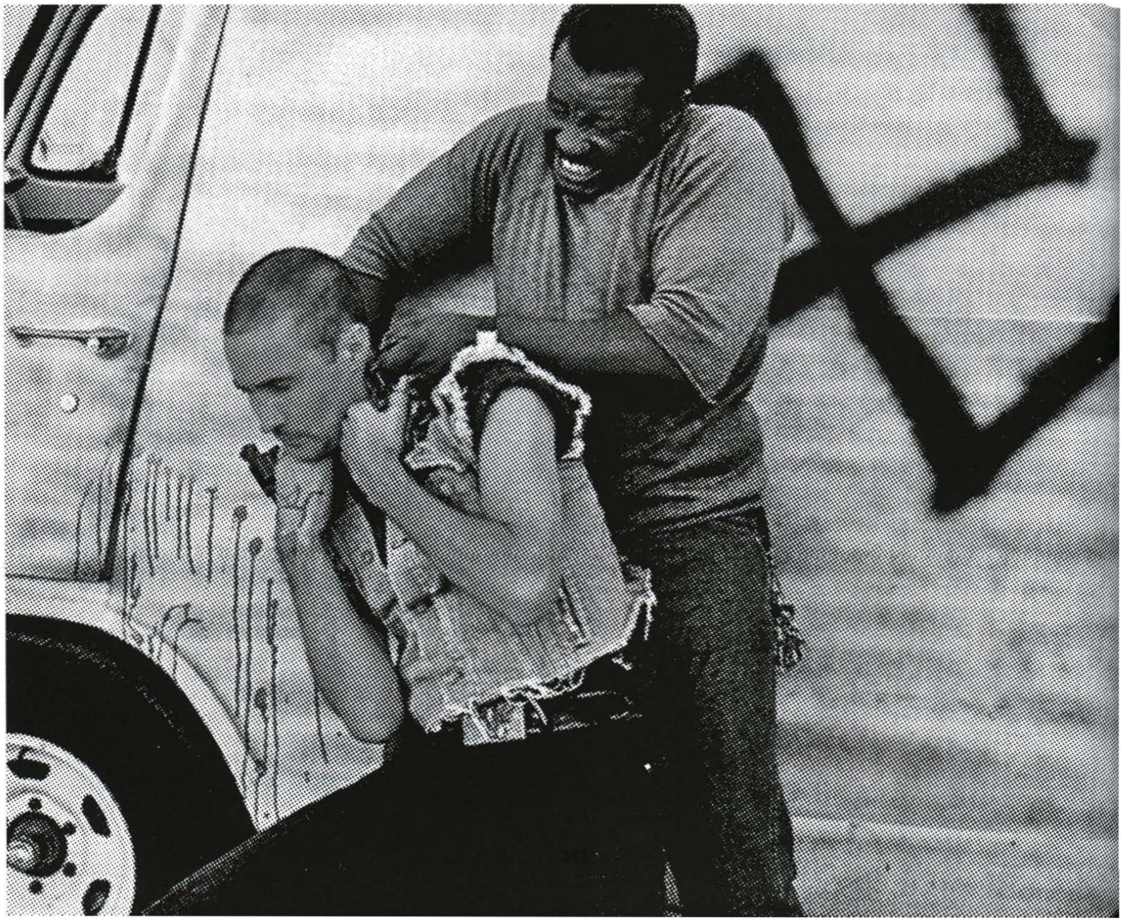
SKINHEADS: THE SECOND COMING OF HATE

Dir Greydon Clark / 1989

A handful of young, able-bodied racists cause trouble in the forest.

Here's an unfairly overlooked gold-plated cheapie from seemingly unstoppable wee-budget virtuoso Greydon "*Joysticks*" Clark, and it may just be the sleaziest in his entire collection. Six urban Nazi youths run rampant, aimlessly terrorizing parking lots and mini-marts. The latter is largely due to the fact that behemoth simpleton "Brains" just can't get enough pink Hostess Sno-Balls. But it doesn't end there; each of them is a master caricature, including the scrawny outcast so eager to please that he's tattooed a swastika on his forehead. After shooting an African-American man in cold blood, they escape in their inconspicuous van...you know, the one with the giant black swastika painted on the side. They head back to their shared studio apartment, where more hand-painted Nazi imagery abounds, including yet another swastika painted on the inside of the Venetian blinds. Muffled trashpunk by Enigma Records band Elvis Hitler rumbles in the background. The skinheads decide to make their post-slaying getaway from the city, and pile back in "the Death Van." At a backwoods gas station diner, they run afoul of vacationing college-goers and stir up some genuine bullshit. Brains dukes it out with a black student who decides to kiss him at the height of battle. Homicide ensues. Young survivors Jeff and Amy are pursued into the forest, where they're sheltered by a retiree-tough woodsman played by the iron-jawed Chuck Connors. Though he'd be dead just three years later, Connors is impressive in his role, and even does the famous gun-cocking trick from early TV western series *The Rifleman*. Things heat up, resulting in multiple gunshot wounds and a grizzly bear with a stomach full of Nazi.

The magic of Greydon Clark lies in his ability to take a limited plot and transform it into an effective melodrama, if not a genuinely gripping film. Though *Skinheads* has the subtlety and production values of a marionette show, there's enough trademarked Clark-power to keep things hyperactively unhinged. Another hard-working component is Brian Brophy, who plays well-spoken, villainous leader Damon. In scenes that might normally be laughable, Brophy seethes with enough rage and venom to keep the film grounded as a relentless hatefest. Plus, he has the best line in the movie, referring to Hitler as "the man I love." Other key cast members are *Space 1999*'s Barbara Bain as the diner owner and late comic relief chrome-dome Dennis Ott as Brains, who accidentally uses poison ivy as toilet paper and ends up rubbing his ass against a tree. (*ZC*)



GREYDON CLARK

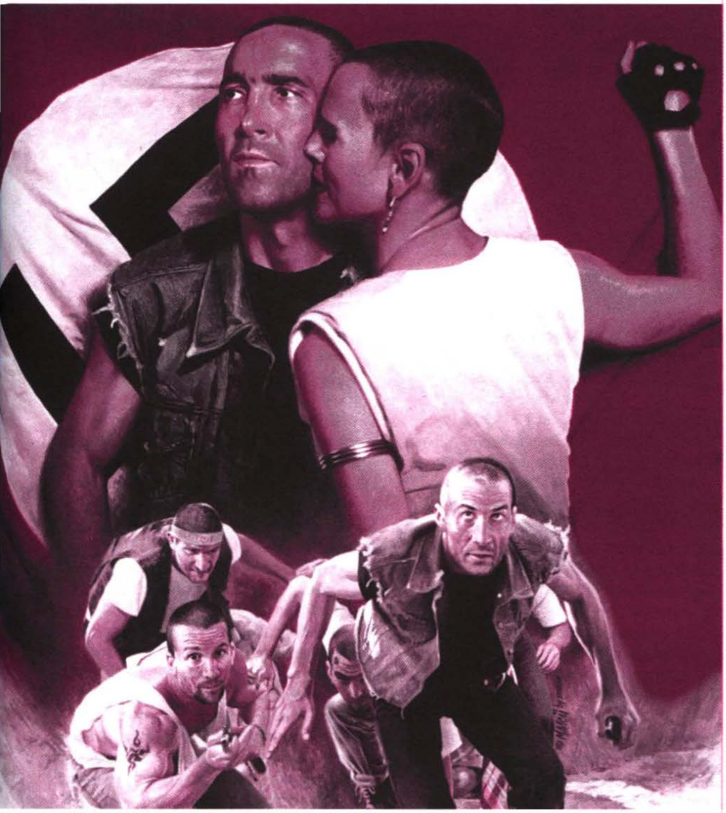
Director – *SKINHEADS: THE SECOND COMING OF HATE*

DAM: Skinheads was a pretty serious topic compared to a lot of exploitation stuff. Like, bikers are a broad subculture, but skinheads are sort of touchier territory. What did you do for research?

GC: I wrote a script called *Uninvited* about a mutant cat that had been taken aboard a luxury yacht and the mayhem that ensues from that. I was in Milan, selling the foreign rights to *Uninvited* and I picked up a copy of *Time* magazine, European edition, and on the cover was a skinhead. The article was about the skinhead phenomenon in Germany and how the German government was concerned about it. It kind of intrigued me, so when I got back to the United States, I did some investigating on the skinheads here, and I ended up writing the script for *Skinheads*. I had a personal relationship with Chuck Connors—my mother-in-law was his secretary for 20 years—so, we weren't close, but I'd met him several times. After I wrote *Skinheads*, I offered the role of the older character who had a confrontation with the skinheads to Chuck Connors. We made the picture in 1987 or 1988, and I was very pleased with it. It's got some humor in it and, of course, the skinheads and their heinous philosophy is exposed for what it is.

As I've mentioned, I've always been politically aware, and this was before skinheads threw the famous chair and broke Geraldo's nose. Plus it was before the Internet, so you couldn't sit down and look up skinheads and read a thousand articles on them. I would go to the library to do research on magazine articles and newspaper articles on them and the neo-Nazi subculture. Obviously, these are repulsive people with repulsive thinking. There were some friends of mine that said, "Aw, Greydon, why do you want to do a picture about skinheads?" I said, "Well, come on, they're not going to be the heroes in the picture." I was interested to see if I could make that kind of political statement and still do an interesting action thriller.

To me, racism and ethnic hate of any kind is just simply stupid. Way, way back before I even came to Los Angeles, I was around 20 and I was in a parade with Martin Luther King in South Bend, Indiana. People I knew said, "How could you do that?" And I said, "How could you not do that?" I think all people really are the same; it's just the culture that we're raised in that makes people different. I really wanted to make that statement, but I wanted to make an entertaining picture and hopefully that's what I did.



The other interesting thing about the movie was of course that you chose to take these skinheads, which are considered kind of an urban blight, and put them out in the forest. Was that a budgetary decision?

It was certainly partially budgetary. If you've seen *Satan's Sadists*, there are a lot of similarities between the two scripts: mainly that innocent people are being chased by this gang of bad guys. And for financial reasons in *Satan's Sadists* it was out in the desert, and in *Skinheads* it was up in the mountains.

The lead skinhead Brian Brophy is great. His performance brought a center to that picture, and he's a wonderful guy.

BRIAN BROPHY

"Damon" – *SKINHEADS: THE SECOND COMING OF HATE*

DAM: *Skinheads* was the first movie you were in...how did you hear about the film?

BB: I heard about it from my agent. I know that there was a writers' strike and there wasn't a lot happening. I remember going in and reading for it, and then going out and getting my hair cut really short and buying the obligatory steel-toed boots and black jeans. I remember rolling in for the callback on it. There was something about the boots and shaved head; there's a transformation that happens. As an actor, you get to look into the background of who these people are, which can be kind of disturbing, so you always have to keep yourself at kind of a distance from the actual thing itself. You're a representation of something that's quite horrific.

When I got cast I was really excited, and I remember meeting up with the other actors and suggesting that we should go out as skinheads. So, there were like five of us and we got together and went to Hollywood Blvd. The looks that we got from people, the space on a sidewalk that someone would give us—you're a pretty menacing presence. Even though we're not anti-Semitic or whatever, with the short T-shirt, tight jeans, black boots... we looked the part. People would yell out of cars at us. People would be walking towards us and they'd literally go to the other side of the street if they'd see us. And that was really interesting. It was just kind of an attitude, but it was the look, which is so identifiable as this subcultural icon of anger and hate.

So, what was the worst thing that happened out there?

Yeah, we didn't get into any fistfights or anything like that. It was just a fascinating experiment seeing how powerful these images are, and how people will just judge you by the exterior. People must imagine that these people are just vile, child-stomping criminals.

That was a pretty intense performance that you put in. Everyone else was kind of comic or straight. What was your character research like?

I did some research on the early days of the Brownshirts in the '30s, which is this growing accumulation of anger and hatred that was brewing and being stoked by Hitler. Looking at the genesis of that hatred of the other: no matter who they were, if they didn't look like you, they were to be mistrusted and diagnosed as inferior in some way. So, part of my film research was based on books about the psychology of Nazis and the rise of Nazism.

We shot it in the woods and not an urban setting, which would have been a little more dangerous. So, we were really isolated and we were there for weeks on end living this character away from the everyday urban milieu of Los Angeles. You were able to create your own character. It really wasn't based so much on a lot of research, to be honest, it's pretty straightforward. It's not terribly in need of deep research. I did know people who had a real animosity towards others because they felt they were taking away jobs. So, I'd been around white supremacists, and I've seen that a lot of times racism comes out because you just don't know anybody who's not white.

Obviously, you're at the other end of the spectrum from that mindset...

I'd like to think so.

Was there any personal hesitation in playing that role in your first feature performance?

Maybe at first, but once I got the part, I decided to go for it. Certain actors relish dangerous parts—like some love to play the villain—and a lot of times they're the most fun. I really enjoyed characterizing and portraying this skinhead. And there might have been a little bit of trepidation at first, but it's a performance, and I don't think people will think of Brian Brophy as a homophobic racist. Maybe people who don't know me could get confused when they meet me.

Were you privy at all to how the film was received? I know there wasn't a big premiere, but did any feedback ever get back to you?

In Hollywood, there's this store called Jerry's Video, which is a real iconic landmark with all kinds of—well, back in that day—VHS tapes. And I walked in one day and they had a big poster of *Skinheads*, and I was like, "Wow! When'd you get that?" And they were like, "Yeah, it just came out on VHS." So, Jerry promoted the movie at the movie store, and that was one of my first experiences of seeing myself on a poster. I didn't know of the critical reception of it. I was reading online something about the Golden Ham Award goes to Brian Brophy, and that was pretty funny.

Do you have any favorite anecdotes from the movie?

One of my most favorite memories was the monologue that Greydon had written about the Zionist occupational government. And I told him I'd like to rewrite it—there was a writers' strike and we didn't have any writers. Greydon and the guy who wrote it were very opposed to it. But he allowed me to rewrite the monologue. And I remember as an actor thinking that it was really cool that a director allowed me to rewrite something and make it better especially since he wrote the script.

And at the end of the monologue I turn around and bang my head against the wall.

SKINS

aka GANG BOYS

Dir. Wings Hauser / 1994

The Nazi youth problem exposed/expanded/exploited.

Gay teen Marjoe kisses his African-American boyfriend good night and walks to the bus stop. There, he's beaten by two cropped thugs who drag him back to a massive skinhead loft party. White-power hardcore blares as dozens of drunken, hairless meatheads grind against their latest female inductee. They shove Marjoe into the center of the room and pound him to a pulp when he's unable to have sex with her. While he recovers, his absentee father Joe (Wings Hauser) returns from rural Mexico to argue his son's gender preference and search for vengeance. In a drunken haze, he follows the skinheads back to a bar where an oi band grinds out their white jams. Joe busts a bottle across the head of the gang's leader (Cole Hauser, Wings' son), but that's as far as his plan goes, and he ends up beaten bloody, pissed on and jailed. After rehab, Joe reorganizes his family and sets out to stop the gang's rash of violence, vandalism and rape. The film deflates in the final stretch and the Nazi offenders are one-dimensional to the point of parody, but Linda Blair and both Hausers put in solid performances. Though nothing will ever be as satisfying as the elder Hauser's villainous insanity in *Vice Squad*, he plays the drunk, homophobic loser to great effect. (*ZC*)

SLAM DANCE

Dir. Wayne Wang / 1987

A mostly-innocent rube is exposed to the raw noir world of sex, art and mistaken identity.

Tom Hulce (*Amadeus*) plays C.C. Drood, a fruitless, self-loathing cartoonist who finds himself wrapped up in LA's artpunk underground after his former mistress (Virginia Madsen) turns up murdered. Within a few days, he's burglarized, held at gunpoint, kidnapped, hit in the nuts with a rubber chicken, arrested, thrown out of a moving car and assaulted in a high-end nightclub filled with animalistic but immaculately styled punks. These subculture harlequins are all wide eyes, facepaint and 90-degree angles as they recklessly collide on the marble dance floor. X's John Doe appears disguised as a regular schmoe, playing opposite this aimless drama's screenwriter Don Opper as the shady duo at the root of Drood's miseries. Minor roles from Adam Ant and Harry Dean Stanton can't distract from *Slam Dance*'s indecipherably tangled plot twists. (*ZC*)

SLAVES OF NEW YORK

Dir. James Ivory / 1989

The pinky finger of New York's art community
extends to new lengths.

Bernadette Peters releases her usual coodles and goos as Eleanor, a doubt-ridden, creatively crippled everywoman drowning among galleries and overpriced lofts. Everyone in her world is a self-serving artist, a conniving social climber and/or a wine-sipping middle-aged debutante. To release her own productive drive, she crafts obnoxious hats that collect dust in retail display windows. Among these cursed outlets is a hair salon that caters to the fashion-fearless, as evidenced by two high-maintenance punks waiting for their geometric dye jobs. Another leather-jacketed street soldier passes by the shop with a red shock cut so wild that it looks like the film is about to transform into a post-apocalyptic sci-fi adventure. But no such luck; instead, the viewer is subjected to over two hours of whining, painting, philandering and vegetarian hors d'oeuvres. Steve Buscemi appears in a supporting role, the poor guy. A Merchant-Ivory production, which shows that the famed filmmaking team are much more talented at boring viewers with drab, stuffy period pieces (*A Room with a View; Howards End*) than drab, stuffy East Coast art puke. (*ZC*)

SLAVES TO THE UNDERGROUND

Dir. Kristine Peterson / 1997

A tear-soaked postcard from the '90s-era
Northwest grunge/riot grrrl scene.

Like the title, this grousing sad sack of a film is unnecessarily dramatic, brimming with middle-class suffering and Caucasian dilemmas. All-girl grunge band No Exits encounter complications due to their guitarist dating their singer. When the former's ex-boyfriend enters the picture, the resulting love triangle threatens to destroy their tiny, self-inflated universe. This conflict reaches its apex at the band's final show, during which a towering obese kid with a spiked hair-fin tosses a half-full can of beer on stage.

As teeth-grindingly "indie" as the pop culture references and direct-to-camera asides are, the film does offer a 20% accurate look at a specific point in Seattle's cultural history. Fallout Records & Comics was a powerful resource and people's arrogant, indulgent bullshit manifested in printed zines rather than in the modern, delete-able online form, proving the only period more disposable than the '90s is *now*. (*ZC*)

SLC PUNK

Dir. James Merendino / 1998

Worthless, unlikeable teens blame society.

It's unfortunate that so many films are constructed from one simple skeletal gimmick, and filmmakers hope to coast on its fumes. Affectation alone cannot propel a film, and *SLC Punk* is a perfect example of this. From the opening credits that re-create classic punk albums to the lazy wardrobe, *SLC Punk* tries to use punk rock to conjure a substantial movie. However, without a real story or characters, the film becomes nullified teenage junk; it's not quite dedicated enough to be parody, and is unconvincing as a snapshot of the punk subculture. So what is the point, exactly? One long gasbag of MTV images, and Matthew Lillard scrunching his face and talking to the camera.

Lillard is Stevo, a long-winded, aimless youth carousing through the streets of Salt Lake City with his buddy Heroin Bob (Michale Goorijan), and spouting mini-essays on his favorite subject, punk. The plot concerns Stevo grappling with his future; he can either follow in his father's footsteps and become a lawyer, or continue wearing novelty T-shirts and bondage pants.

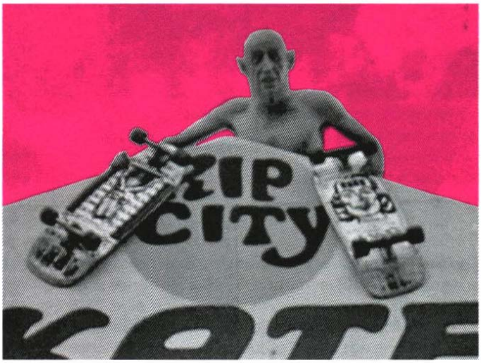
Let's discuss the costume design, and what defines a rebel, fashion-wise, in this film. At one point, Stevo wears a freshly ironed UPS ("United Pot Smokers") T-shirt. The year is allegedly 1985, but all the street kid leads look curiously like cyber ravers who've been fired from the mall. The clothes ring false, and this immediately withdrew me from the story. Though time travel is fascinating, '90s Lacoste windbreakers aren't punk. Dressing like Ted Knight (or Rodney Dangerfield, for that matter) in *Caddyshack* is not going to cut it. And from those inaccurate seeds of dress, so the film goes. There is no real exploration of the subculture, no character development and little to justify the inclusion of the lifestyle at all, beyond the need for a gimmick to drag the film around.

The whole enterprise is vapid, wheel-spinning celluloid sludge. The film is sedentary, which is ironic, as punk is all about movement, excitement and busting loose. *SLC Punk* conveys none of that excitement. Sure, it struggles to be outrageous—including the strange bargain bin Oliver Stone psychedelic sequences—but has no creative spark to truly engage the viewer. The ubiquity of punk as an affectation is far too prevalent in the real world; we sure don't need more product that uses it as a springboard to nothing. (*SC*)

THE SLOG MOVIE

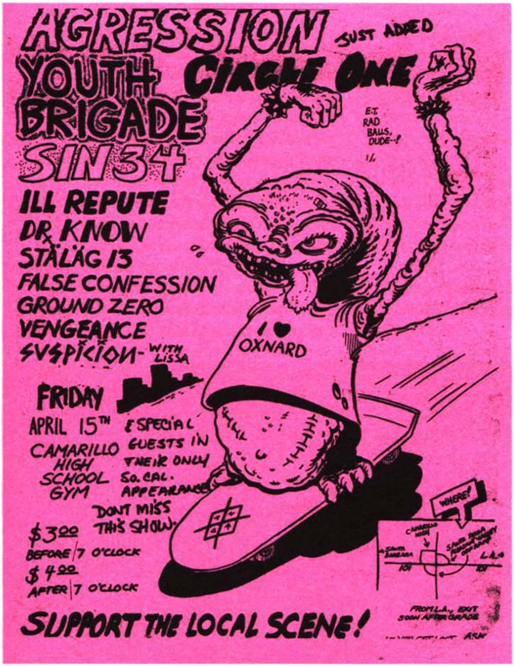
Dir. Dave Markey / 1981

Punk lifer Markey's indispensable Super 8 document
of the early '80s Santa Monica/Hollywood scene.



Two casually-attired adolescent thrashers spraypaint the film's title on a brick wall in plain view of traffic, and then run for cover. These junior vandals canvas the abandoned corners of the city, tagging every surface with the names of the bands included in the film: Wasted Youth, TSOL, Circle Jerks and the director's band Sin 34. Circle One are given more coverage than any other group in the film. Local legends that were little-known outside of Southern California, they were a powerful, restless hardcore outfit whose likeable singer John Macias would be gunned down by cops on the Santa Monica pier less than a decade after *The Slog Movie* was completed.

West LA high schoolers Symbol 6 rehearse directly into the camera before playing a day show at the bygone Club 88, which Mike Watt recalls as having "a trippy smell." Ted Nugent is brutally


AGRESSION
JUST ADDED
YOUTH BRIGADE
CIRCLE ONE
E.T. RAD BALLS, DUDE--!
SIN 34
ILL REPUTE
DR. KNOW
STÄLÄG 13
FALSE CONFESSION
GROUND ZERO
VENGEANCE
SVSPICION - WITH LISSA
I ♥ OXNARD
FRIDAY
APRIL 15TH
CAMARILLO HIGH SCHOOL GYM
& SPECIAL GUESTS IN THEIR ONLY SO. CAL. APPEARANCE
DONT MISS THIS SHOW
$3.00 BEFORE 7 O'CLOCK
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WHERE?
CAMARILLO HIGH
SANTA BARBARA
101
L.A.
FROM L.A., EXIT SOON AFTER GRADE
SUPPORT THE LOCAL SCENE!

mocked as payback for his statements that "punk is bunk" and "The Clash are a bunch of pygmy faggots." Satan (or a shirtless kid in a rubber mask) hawks the new line of Raymond Pettibon-designed decks in a Rip City Skate Shop commercial directed by Pettibon himself. Beyond the chaotic live footage of bands like Fear and Red Cross, there's a rarely captured bashfulness in the local punk teens, shying away from the lens, sipping their sodas at Oki Dog until the cops arrive.

As with his Black Flag tour chronicle *Reality 86'd*, Markey's documentary style is more personal than traditionally structured, careening between shows, conversations, hamming and accidental moments of awkward hilarity. The subjects treat Markey as an equal; it's clear that this film could only have been made by someone in, from and dedicated to the scene it covers. We Got Power Films collaborator Jordan Schwartz flips his lid when a convenience store won't sell him beer because of his appearance: "Punk rockers are the niggers of the world, man! Fuck that!! We gotta *rise above*!"

Markey questions the wee, bleach-hawked tagger from the opening credits, "How long do you think punk rock is gonna last?" The kid replies without hesitation: "Forever!!" (*ZC*)

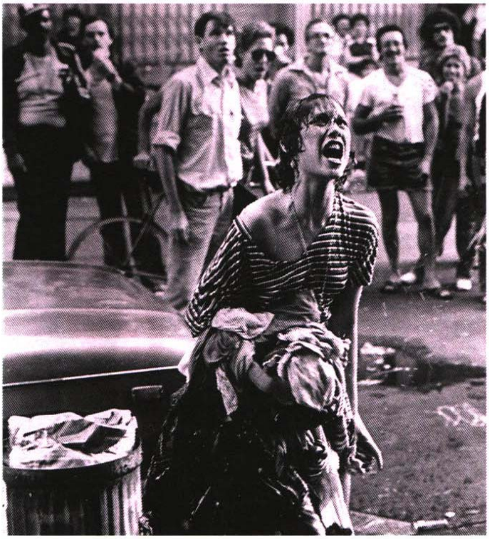
SMITHEREENS

Dir. Susan Seidelman / 1982

A self-centered scenester brings hard times
on herself and others.

This guerrilla production was the first from the future director of *Desperately Seeking Susan*, and is a committed representation of the NYC punk movement on the verge of deflating. Fashionable new wave art wannabe Wren (Susan Berman) rabidly self-promotes by placing her Xeroxed photo on every public surface, and tries to make contacts via heroin-chic rock shows at the famed, defunct Peppermint Lounge. Rebuked by the upper crust of New York rockers, she meets up with fish-out-of-water Montana boy Paul (Brad Rijn), a young loser who lives in his van. He's mystified by the garish punk princess and all but stalks her, eventually wearing through her frozen-cool veneer. A love triangle is completed by Eric (Richard Hell), the dazedly amused singer of fictional band Smithereens and an infinitely more relevant addition to Wren's world. When she's evicted from her apartment, she's forced to rely on the kindness of others and eventually turns to Paul, her inconsistent emotions and behavior bringing him nothing but misery.

All three leads provide impressively strong performances, especially considering their modest acting backgrounds and the film's lengthy and often interrupted shooting schedule. Cookie Mueller, punk filmmaker Amos Poe and other period East Coast luminaries also appear in minor roles.



Seidelman conceived *Smithereens* while attending NYU film courses in the late '70s, stating she was inspired by the creativity and success of fellow East Coast upstarts like Poe and Jim Jarmusch. Shooting began in 1980 with an initial budget of $20,000, but was held up six months when Berman broke her ankle falling from a fire escape in the first week of production. Locations included the then-barren Westside Highway and the actual "Hooker Alley." Everything was shot permit-free, with club interiors only made available to the crew between 4 and 8 AM. John Cale of The Velvet Underground was initially set to provide the soundtrack, but it didn't work out and much of the film's instrumental score ended up borrowed and re-edited from early tracks by The Feelies.

Smithereens is an important feature, using the same components that marked other films of the era but in a strong, believable and linear story. Like Penelope Spheeris' masterpiece *Suburbia*, it's both a criticism and love letter to the scene, and a crucial exploration of a landmark age in punk's (de)evolution. (*ZC*)

RICHARD HELL

Self – *THE BLANK GENERATION ('76);*
"Billy" – *BLANK GENERATION ('80);* "Crash" – *FINAL REWARD;*
"Eric" – *SMITHEREENS;* "The Rawhide Kid" – *GEEK MAGGOT BINGO*

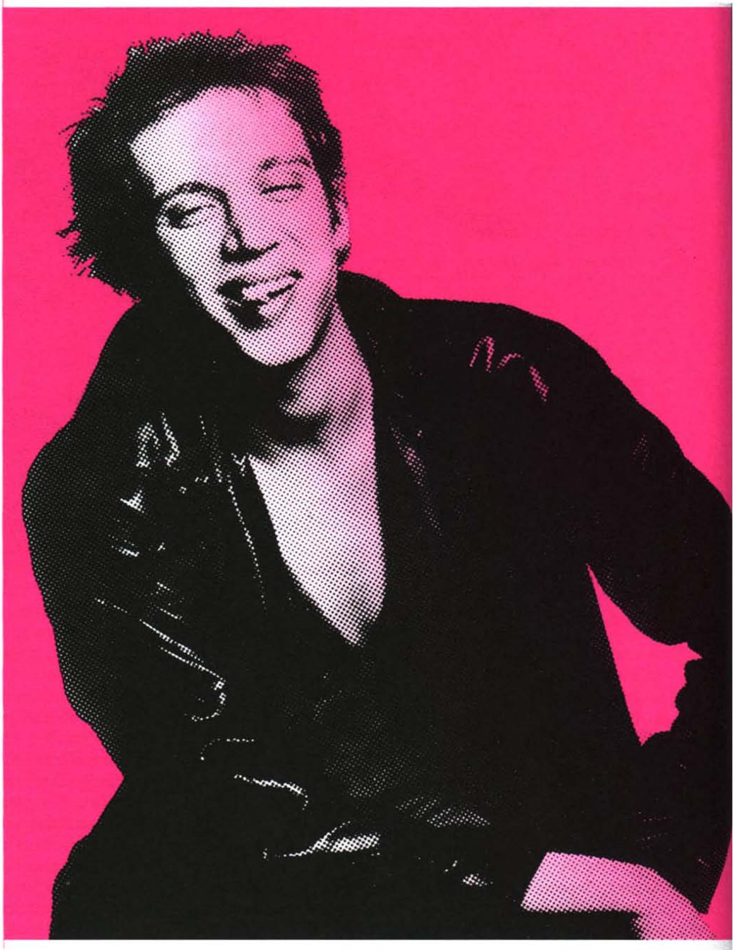
DAM: You'd been working in a movie memorabilia shop?

RH: Yeah, that was the last day job I had, back in 1973. It was called Cinemabilia. Working there actually played in a lot to the creation of the first bands I was in that played in public. The guy that was the manager of the store was named Terry Ork. He was way on the fringe of the Warhol circle, and just kind of a happy-go-lucky nightcrawler in the New York underground. After I worked there for a while, I told my friend Tom [Verlaine] that it was a good gig, and he came and got a job there too. Actually, later, Robert Quine—who ended up playing guitar in the Voidoids—got a job there right when I was about to leave. But Ork not only suggested a guitar player, his young boyfriend, to me and Verlaine, who ended up being the second guitarist in our band Television. He also gave us his loft to rehearse in. That store was all wrapped up with my life as a musician and the birth of that band, and things that ended up putting CBGBs on the map.

Cinemabilia was the job that I ended up having for the longest, actually. I'd never usually keep a job for more then six months...I'd just work until I could save up enough to live for a month without working. Then I'd quit and survive for as long as I could before looking for another job. They were all just boring, menial clerk or physical labor-type jobs. But I was at that shop for probably about two years. I'd always been into movies, and this was a real education for me. It was probably the most sophisticated store of its type in the world. There were similar places in Hollywood that specialized in memorabilia or books, but this place had to be the best. They sold stills, posters, film literature, scripts: you name it. By the time I left there, I was actually able to supplement my income by writing term papers for people taking courses at Columbia.

It was soon after this that Amos Poe and Ivan Kral started working on *The Blank Generation*?

In interviews, Amos says I persuaded him to do it. I don't remember it, but he states that he used to come to Cinemabilia and I would tell him that I have this great band, and there was a scene that had picked up in a bar in the Bowery and he should come out and shoot it. I don't recall saying that, but I've seen where he's told this story. That film happened to take place at a time when many of the most interesting bands to come out of there were playing well and it was exciting at the club. But to me, that movie is pathetic. I mean, it's really ludicrous, beyond a joke that someone could make a rock 'n' roll



movie without sound. It's not high concept, it's just obvious that the movie's infuriating. Now, on the other hand, who knows how well the bands were playing, since you couldn't hear them. There's literally no way to excuse that there wasn't sound in a music documentary. OK, it's nice to have some moving pictures, I guess. Some of the stuff that's shot in the corners of CBGBs where people are sitting, or the Heartbreakers photo session, is cool too. But to me, that film is emblematic of the lost opportunity for there to be films made around that moment in music. Because there weren't. The little film scene that there was happened a bit later. That movie was an embarrassment.

Did you feel that way when it came out?

Yes, absolutely. What else would I think? The other thing was that he was really indiscriminate about what bands he shot. There were some horrible bands in there and some bands that didn't belong. You could say, "Well, it was indicative of what was going on at CBGB's at the time," because there were mediocre bands playing and bands that held no special interest. Some weren't doing anything new with their music. In that sense, it fairly represents what was going there. But who wants to look at mediocre bands? And who wants to look at any bands when you can't hear what they're playing?

It's funny to hear this after talking to people who seem to revere that film—

I don't believe that. Who? If you revere it, explain to me how.

Well, it's given a lot of credit because it was the first document of the scene...

I don't think that's true. I think anybody that loves that movie is a crank or a fool. There's no honor in being the first to do something really badly. Sure, there are fanatical collector/scholars of various areas in culture who are able to somehow get enthusiastic about any little scrap of information they can turn up in their special little field of interest — usually because other people don't care about it. If other people did care about it, then these people wouldn't because it's all about being the sole holder of this information. It's a neurotic syndrome among fanatical scholars. Anybody that would actually regard that film as "good" has their priorities confused. If you found snapshots of Elvis backstage, sure, that would be exciting. That doesn't mean they're good photographs.

I feel this way about almost every movie I've been part of. It's disappointing, because there were opportunities missed. But at the same time, I can't—in good conscience—be too disappointed or outraged because I didn't contribute anything either. I was a letdown too. The right person in the role could have found a way to redeem it through his or her performance, but I didn't have the chops to be able to do that.

So *Final Reward* came around a little later. Did you know the director personally?

No, he just called me up and asked if I would do it. He was giving me a little money, and I had an interest in movies. Plus I thought enough of myself where it stoked my ego. So I agreed to do it. That's how I ended up in all the movies I was in. People would ask me and I'd usually say yes. This film was a little different than I expected. It was an interesting concept and a wild cast, it sounded great on paper. The people in it were interesting: the story is a noir among New York underground types. For me, the best part was that I got to meet Cookie Mueller, who became one of my closest friends. She really was a huge part of my life, and I met her while making that film. But the people making these movies—including me—to me, it was just kind of depressing, because very few of the films ended up being of interest. Which is so strange...you would have thought that with the resources, at that time, in that place, an interesting movie could be made.

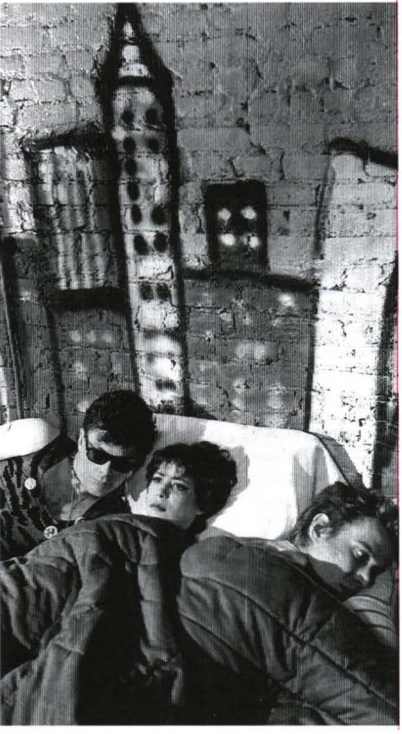
Final Reward did have a really good moment or two. I like the scene with Cookie and me, where I'm whipping her with a belt. That's my favorite part. But there are so many non-sequiturs in the movies I've done, and you just get tired of them after about five minutes. With the exception of *Smithereens*. But it's definitely the case with the Ulli Lommel *Blank Generation*. But I feel that way when I see myself on screen; It's all affected, I'm just sleepwalking. So it's really just as well that some of these movies aren't available because they're just so embarrassing. On the other hand, if it was available, nobody would look at it anyway, so what difference does it make?

I had to do an interview about the Lommel *Blank Generation* recently, and while I was looking at it again, it occurred to me that there are a couple redeeming factors about that film. One of them is that it looks really good. Ed Lachmann shot it and he's a great cinematographer. Also, the music in that one is great. Not only the unique scenes of my band playing live, but the score is gorgeous. Elliot Goldenthal, I think his name was. I started to wonder if the film could be saved if it were re-cut and you could change people's lines. Like what Woody Allen did with *What's Up Tiger Lily*, and just redub it. But the only thing you could do that would have any truth to it would just be to have the characters say, "Oh, my face hurts. I don't know how much longer I can hold this strange facial expression." And the other character would have to say the same thing back. It would be fun if someone could get the rights to all these movies and make one single film that's actually interesting to look at, that had some value to it and was amusing or stimulating, rather than just basically raw footage. Take the footage from *Final Reward*, Lommel's *Blank Generation*, a little from *Smithereens*, some of the Eric Mitchell stuff...it'd be hard. To me, the only New York punk cinema stuff of that era that had any value was by Richard Kern. He made brilliant movies. *You Killed Me First* is the greatest movie of that whole era. Nick Zedd did great work too, often as an actor, though as an actor he doubtless contributed a lot of ideas too.

You have strong feelings about the 1980 *Blank Generation*, I know, but you're credited as one of the three writers on it. Is that right?

Oh, that's really embarrassing... That happened in a couple ways. You know, the relationships between me and everybody deteriorated so quickly once that movie started being made. I was always battling them and using any leverage I could get to try to get some kind of control over what was going on. At some point, we made it a condition of my being in the move that I get a writer's credit because I more or less contributed two speeches. I thought at the time, deludedly, that having a writing credit on a movie might make it easier for me to make a movie myself in the future and allow me that track record. I actually thought it'd be to my advantage to have my name credited for the script for *Blank Generation*. But I had nothing to do with it. The script was Lommel's work except for a short soliloquy or two of mine.

The script kept changing. You never knew when you did a shot where it was supposed to go, or how it was supposed to fit into any narrative at all. So you were just kind of at a loss about what you were doing and what it was supposed to mean. Finally, I got so disgusted that my method of dealing with it was just to kind of go passive. Like passive resistance. I just would not let any expression into anything I did. And it all really was just completely inappropriate. Nothing that happens from one minute to the next—including the dialogue—makes sense. Again, it's all non-sequiturs. It's ludicrous. That scene where we're in the car and arguing about whether or not we're going to the beach on Long Island, then we turn around and drive back to the city, then she jumps in the driver's seat and leaves me standing there, morosely whining, "But it's my car..." None of it has any relationship to anything that could ever happen in real life. I realized later that when he asked us to say those lines, he must have thought, "This is what 'blank generation' means: you can't decide whether you want to go to the beach or not." That's the only way I can explain what he was thinking. But yes, I did have a writer's credit for two minor speeches of my own dialogue. That's it.



You could just tell it was falling apart right off the bat?

It looked good on paper. When they asked me to do it, I did a little research about the director. He'd made a movie before that was called *Tenderness of the Wolves*. It blew me away. I thought it was brilliant. I was attracted to it because I have an affection for vampires and the protagonist was a bloodsucker. And Lommel was also connected to Fassbinder, who I was an admirer of. But *Tenderness of the Wolves* was so impressive, so I was baffled at how the movie he was making with me could be so execrable. So I went back and looked at the other film so I could try to explain the drop in ability. That's when I noticed that the star of that movie, Kurt Raab, also wrote it and did the set design, which pretty much covers everything that was great about the movie. Furthermore, Fassbinder was one of the editors. So I suddenly saw how I'd been deceived. The only thing I could see that he brought from Fassbinder was this bitchiness and this glorying in getting petty little feuds started, playing on people's insecurities on the set. That was something Fassbinder was famous for... this queeny, bitchy cliché gay world. It may not be politically correct to say that, but it's just a fact. And in Fassbinder's hands, it resulted in some amazing movies, but it's pretty ugly to me as a world. I didn't like being part of that way of dealing with other people, insulting them all the time and playing them against each other. It's kind of like the Warhol Factory world a bit. I felt pretty immune to it because I just thought it was annoying and I wouldn't buy into it, but that was his style.

We can edit any of this out later.

It's fine. There are people I like too. But I may say too much about the ones I don't. I don't think I'd edit anything out about Lommel, though...he's a real lowlife.

But *Smithereens* was a better experience all around...

Smithereens is much, much better than *Blank Generation*. It has a lot going for it, but it's very MOR. There's nothing challenging or new about it, but it's professionally done and it has some charm. I felt a little queasy about it later because of the way it represented the music scene in New York. Because I had a role in it, it could have been read as kind of an endorsement of that movie's portrayal of that scene. Really, what was going on was that the film was Susan Seidelman's conception of what the music scene in New York was like, without her having any first-hand experience in it. It was a very NYU, upper middle-class concept of what people's values were. It was all about getting famous, while treating it like that was an empty ideal. Having it both ways. But it didn't really approach that issue, it just more portrayed it in a sort of cartoon. The music world I came out of was nothing like that. It wasn't about people whose ambition was to move to Malibu and lie on the beach.

It seems like your acting in it is much lighter than in other films...like you were actually allowed to have fun.

She was the first person I'd worked with who knew how to handle actors. Also, her scriptwriter was really a pro, and he was trying to write a script that I could handle. They had shot some of it with another guy in my role, but something went wrong and he couldn't do it. So they were searching for someone else and they called me. I know they changed the script after I came on, and I think it was to take advantage of whatever I'd be bringing to it. What that was, I have no idea. I mean, at least characters in that movie had conversations that weren't just pastiches of half-remembered lines from old film noirs or fantasies of how an avant-garde director can get even more existentialist. *Smithereens* had actual conversations in it instead of these weird, mutant, incompetent concepts of what dialogue is like the other movies I'd been part of. It was much easier to be natural. I was very self-conscious...I wasn't a "real" actor. But she was very good at finding how to make the actors comfortable, and allowed me to work within my limitations. The material was just better, and it was by far the best movie I was in.

So that chronologically brings us to *Geek Maggot Bingo*. Which really is entertaining, especially your Rawhide Kid character.

Let me tell you a funny story about that movie. Nick Zedd was really hoping that film would lead him to serious feature filmmaking. He was really going for it with this one, hoping to get his career in gear.

After completing it, he had a screening uptown where he invited all the press and distributors. He wanted to screen it for anyone that could possibly help with its success. So the place he rented had about 90 seats, and he sent out invitations and the seats were filled. I went to see it, and was surprised that the room filled up. Within ten minutes after it started, I fell asleep. I woke up maybe half an hour later, and there was nobody else in the room. Everybody had left. The movie still had 45 minutes to play, I woke up and nobody was there.

I edited this literary magazine in the late '80s and I interviewed Nick for it. Sometime, a few years beforehand, I'd been at a barbecue and John Ashberry was there. Without a doubt, he's the most highly respected living poet in America. He's won every prize, and it's the rare case where the most respected poet really is the greatest. He's brilliant, funny: an interesting man. And here he is at this barbecue, and we were talking, and he knew me best from my role in *Geek Maggot Bingo*. He could recite whole long swatches of dialogue from the movie: I'm serious, he knew it by heart. He's well known for liking really kitschy shit. But that movie does have its partisans.

You have to love those special effects. The film is so low budget that you hear the phone ring, a guy picks it up and it's literally made out of cardboard. The closest they could come to a real telephone was to draw one. But those long, laborious speeches by that scientist guy: you can see that movie really being great at about 20 minutes. As with a lot of exploitation flicks, the trailer is better than the movie. And so in that way he did exactly what he intended to and the movie's a success.

Everyone in *Geek Maggot Bingo* was just having fun. It was like a party. I did it because...why not? He gave me enough money to buy my methadone.

Besides in *Geek Maggot Bingo*, you always played the shiftless, frustrated New York musician. Did that get irritating...did you want to play other types of roles?

No. I wasn't cut out to be an actor. I did those movies because they asked me to and I could make some money. It was just a job to help pay the rent. And I loved movies, so that had a big part in it too. They meant a whole lot to me, and there's a lot about the whole process that's really interesting. But I have no ambitions as an actor and I never really did. There was a very short period where I thought I might do some kind of little movie role every few years because people occasionally wanted me to act and I seemed to have some kind of facility, but I realized before too long that it wasn't really true. So I didn't need to expand my range.

SUSAN SEIDELMAN

Director – *SMITHEREENS; DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN; MAKING MR. RIGHT*

SS: I had moved in the mid-'70s to go to NYU film school, and the film department was down in the East Village. At that time, the East Village was kind of a funky place because it was transitioning out of the hippie '60s, but there was also a real recession going on in New York, so everything was kind of dilapidated and crumbling apart because the city was bankrupt. That's the sort of the world I was living in during my NYU years, but there was something kind of wonderful about that environment because out of that scruffiness came that whole punk scene, the kind of music, which was in some ways trying to rebel against the overproduced mainstream music of the '70s. Also, because the buildings were so dilapidated, they were great canvases for people like graffiti artists or for people to stick up makeshift flyers and posters for whatever little thing they were doing. Also, the housing was cheap down there, so it was a time when creative people could still afford to live in Manhattan.

So, when I was at film school, I made a lot of friends that worked on these little short films that I was making, and I kept in touch with them after I graduated. Sometime after 1979 or so, I got the idea... instead of just making these shorts, if we just pooled our resources, maybe I could get the money to do a very low-budget independent feature-length film that was kind of set in this milieu that I was living in during my film school years. I had the idea for the characters before I knew what the story was going to be about. I knew I wanted to set it in this world and with these characters. The other thing that was happening at that time was that there was a real mix between people in the art world, the music world and the film world. Musicians were acting in films and artists were doing the sets, and this real kind of cross-pollination was going on. That was part of the spirit I wanted to capture in the movie, and also the way I wanted to make the movie. I wanted to use a mix of actors, musicians and other filmmaker friends in the movie. That's what led to the genesis of *Smithereens.*

The story itself, I wouldn't say is totally autobiographical. The idea of that character, this kind of girl who feels the need to escape from the suburbs of New Jersey and kind of move to the city where she thought life would be more interesting and she'd be around more interesting people, and be a part of something. That was definitely something that I related to. I came from the suburbs of Philadelphia, and I definitely felt that pull to go to New York City at that time because I felt that had to be something more than the life I was living in suburban Philadelphia.

DAM: So, was that scene in New York really as exclusive as it was portrayed?

I don't know if it was exclusive because all different kinds of people were a part of it, but I think that one of the attractions was that the downtown world attracted people from all over the country who felt like outsiders. They felt some kind of magnetic pull to New York City at that time, and downtown was cheap to live in. The lead character of Wren in the movie, she thinks that just by hanging out with people, that she can become a part of it. She didn't have any particular skills: musical, artistic or otherwise. But maybe she was ahead of her time because today there are certainly a lot of people who seem to have no specific skills at all and are huge stars. But she kind of felt that if she hung out with the right people and did enough self-promotion, that she would be a star too.

How did Susan Berman and Richard Hell end up coming into the project?

Susan Berman came from Los Angeles and moved to New York to become an actress. She came in because a friend of mine had seen her in some off-off-off-off Broadway performance piece and thought she was really interesting and had this gamine quality. I had auditioned a lot of actresses and I felt a lot of them were too actressy for the role, but when I met her, she had this feisty, street kind of quality that appealed to me. And that's why I decided I wanted to work with her.

With Richard, we were looking for someone who was a musician type who might wanna act, and I remember we met with some other people who were possibilities like David Johansen from the New York Dolls. But there was just something about Richard, that quality of scam, street guy—he was both appealing and a little bit dangerous and just sexy enough—and he also wanted to be in movies. He just felt like he was right for that part. Originally, that part was written a little differently, but I'm a great believer that if someone has a interesting personality or an interesting persona, then you can adjust their part to kind of work with what's so interesting about them, which can be used to the film's advantage.

KEEP
LOOKING

He basically played a similar character in other movies, but it seems like *Smithereens* is where it comes across.

It's a combination of the right person with their own unique persona, and putting them in the right scenes and writing a part that isn't just a documentary portrait of them, but heightens the reality of them a little bit.

One of the scenes where that really comes through, where he seems like he's having a lot of fun is when the character Wren gets in that slap fight in the coffee shop. It looked like he was about to bust up laughing but because he should have been and not because he was going to break character.

I was also curious what scouting locations and actually shooting was really like. I'm sure in that case you had a controlled environment but a lot of it seems like you were going renegade around New York.

We were. Now, Miramax or The Weinstein Company does "indie" films, but they're like $20,000,000 indie films! Back in 1980, there weren't that many films being shot in Manhattan at all, so you could just run around the streets with a camera and get great stuff, like all the stuff on the subway. We never thought to get permits to film, we just went down around 2:00 in the morning and just rode the subways until 5:00 AM and no one stopped us: and the same with the other locations. We shot in The Peppermint Lounge, which was kind of in a transition but they had punk shows. It pre-dated Danceteria and The Mudd Club, and they let us film there for no fee as long as we brought a crowd.

So, those weren't existing shows?

No, that was a band called The Nightcaps that we brought in. I think what happened back then was that everyone had a bit of naïveté, everyone wanted to be in a film. Everyone would say, I have these friends, I know this band, I know these people, we'll invite them to be a part of it and you know it wasn't about asking for money. It was just about making a movie.

In a lot of movies you can tell when they have a scene that's manufactured, and when they're just shooting out and about, and to the credit *Smithereens*, it doesn't feel like there's that separation. Were there any funny stories while you were shooting, other than Susan Berman falling out the window?

That was the big one, but it all turned out to be a good thing because we came back later and finished the film better than we would have otherwise. I don't think there were any horror stories, but New York was in this economic recession and the abandoned lot where the painted van was parked is now a Trump high-rise. At that time, the west side of New York was just abandoned docks, an old railway station that wasn't being used and all these abandoned lots. So we were able to camp out there and shoot. The scene with the hookers, by the West Side highway, that was really a hooker hangout back then. We added some hookers of our own, but there's gotta be some real hookers mixed in the background because that was just where they were.

So, how did the film go over? What was the premiere like and what were people's reactions?

It was weird because things happened kind of quickly. The movie took a while for me to finish editing because it was done in drips and drabs. I'd get a little money and I'd edit. Also, we shot for a few weeks and then Susan Berman broke her leg, then we shot again, then we waited a few more weeks and then shot again, so it was all done over the period of about two years. I finally edited the final version and got it into the lab, and around that time I had applied for a film festival—I was pretty naïve about film festivals, and I just applied for the Cannes Film Festival because I had heard of it. I knew it was a big film festival, but I knew nothing about it. The person at Cannes sent me a note saying, "We'd love to see your film, please send it over to the screening room and we'll take a look at it." They gave me a date, and I rushed to get it out of the film lab to bring it over to the screening room for them to see it. So, they looked at it and I was really surprised because they were the first outside people to ever see it and it got invited to the festival. Then, as a result of Cannes, we got New Line Cinema to distribute the film, and usually independent films have to really struggle to get that distribution deal, so it was luck and good timing, and I guess the film kind of hit the zeitgeist.

Wow. That's the opposite of everyone else's bitter stories.

I know. It was kind of weird. I have my own bitter stories from later on in my career, but that wasn't one of them.

SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM

Dir. Ray Baseley / 1988

Australians party in the post-nuclear rubble.

Three Armageddon scavengers stumble across a massive subterranean shindig where remaining survivors spend their final hours dancing and chugging. The house band is the Birthday Party-esque combo Blue Ruin, who casually provide the soundtrack to the apocalypse. Attendees of the kamikaze soirée include an array of college types, rockers and punks getting their first and final dose of actual anarchy. The band's guitarist is the most resplendent example, wearing a wildly torn Exploited shirt and an array of jangling studs and chains. As everyone counts down to mass extinction, the party degenerates into a morass of violence, vomit and radiation suicides. When the drugs run low, revelers stick their heads in the microwave for one final, fatal high. The film's two leads spend mankind's last moment sitting in lawn chairs, basking in the oncoming white-hot atomic blast like a man-eating sunrise. (*ZC*)

SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL

Dir. Howard Deutch / 1987

A compelling saga of doomed teen romance.

Eric Stoltz is Keith, a blandly disaffected high school senior with an incredibly high voice and delusions of rebelliousness. He's obsessed with Amanda Jones (Lea Thompson), a powerful teen socialite and girlfriend to the wealthy and unfaithful Hardy (Craig Sheffer). Keith's far more interesting best pal Watts (Mary Stuart Masterson) is an orphaned modern beatnik flaunting a militant Indigo Girls chic. Keith's burning crush on preppy Amanda is an endless source of irritation for Watts, mainly because the only reason she even attends school is her hopeless love for her clueless pal. She brings drumsticks to school rather than textbooks and slums with the ragged new wavers who clutter the halls. That clique's driving force is charismatic skinhead Duncan (Elias Koteas), who transcends the patented misfit stereotype to create a deeply likeable punk character.

The stage is set for the classic John Hughes love triangle. Though he handled just the screenplay and left the directing duties to Deutch, Hughes' standards are all over the film. It could be dismissed at points as a sappy romance drama, but the patented Ringwald cuteness is refreshingly absent (she was offered the role of Amanda but declined). Thompson almost didn't take the role of Amanda either, but later stated she was extremely glad she did, as she wed director Deutch not long after the film hit screens.

At one point, Keith is dumped into detention with various gangstas, hardcases and punks. As the spiked-mohawk and bleach-job types stare ahead in silence, he develops an unexpected friendship with Duncan. Keith shows him a romantic pencil sketch of Amanda; Duncan shows him a drawing of "what his girlfriend would look like without skin." Meanwhile, Watts attempts to induce jealousy in Keith by feigning lust with a skater chowderhead who mentions that his mother is a plumber. This ends up being the first in a long string of pained teenage manipulations and emotional acrobatics that lead to several very well-acted moments and a better-than-Hughes'-average conclusion. Almost every memorable scene centers on Masterson, especially the sequences of her drumming, lovesick and overwhelmed in her bedroom studio. Tears roll down her face as an oversized Sex Pistols poster looms in the background. (*ZC*)

SONGWRITER

Dir. Alan Rudolph / 1984

A country musician/producer (Willie Nelson)
searches for redemption.

True, a Willie Nelson drama is the last place you'd look for a sleeveless mohawked hardcore kid. But there he is, dining at a truck stop restaurant while Nelson sits out his fictional rise and fall in the music industry. Another surprise is the strong craftsmanship of the film, which co-stars Kris Kristofferson and Lesley Ann Warren and draws incredible performances from all three. Rip Torn is at his full potential here as a careening, cuckolded loser. The plot is scant, but *Songwriter* functions very well as a collection of great moments, many of them featuring old Southern men engaged in creative swearing. Punks: take careful note of Willie's anarchy-inspiring "FUCK OFF" T-shirt. (*ZC*)

SONNY BOY

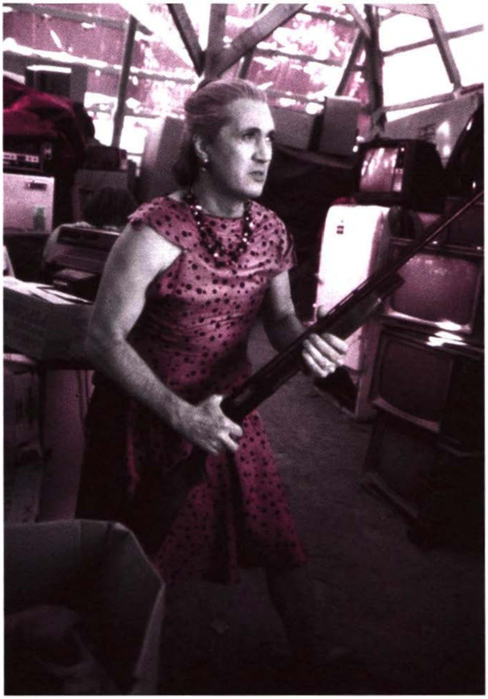
Dir. Robert Martin Carroll / 1989

A child is raised as a bloodthirsty pet by a very unusual family.

1970. In a New Mexico desert community, aptly-named miscreant Weasel (Brad Dourif) kills a young couple for their car. Unbeknownst to him, a baby is asleep in the back seat. Weasel delivers the auto to his pugnacious bossman Slue (Paul "Bluto" Smith), whose "wife" Pearl (David Carradine in near-passable drag) discovers the child and claims it as her own. A bizarre montage shows Sonny Boy's torturous passage into mute manimalhood as he's subjected to endless sadistic indignities at the whims of his new father. At age 17, he's unleashed as a feral killing machine for Slue and the family relocates to Los Angeles. Weasel comes along for the ride, having shed his desert urchin aesthetic for a leather jacket and green-frosted mohawk/ponytail combo. Rather than find a greater criminal success in the big city, the family faces the greatest battle of their lives.

This is an incredibly bizarre and unclassifiable movie that careens from violent action insanity to tender transvestite family drama. Always entertaining, the picture isn't even bogged down by the voiceover narration from the otherwise inarticulate Sonny Boy. Screenwriter Graeme Whifler had previously directed videos for such anti-pop combos as The Residents and Sparks, but the film's decidedly un-new wave theme music was provided by Carradine.

This was the first film from director Carroll, and the only one he'd attempt for more than a decade. In an email to The Unknown Movies site, he wrote: "I just saw it again for the first time in a few years and even I was shocked at times. When it first came out it upset the theater owners so much that it was pulled by most of them.



It's a complex film with lots to explore. I knew it was troubling while I made it. *Sonny Boy* essentially stopped my career. My agent actually let me go because a famous producer she worked with said she hated it so much that she wouldn't work with her again if she represented me. Wow, that hurt." (*ZC*)

THE SORE LOSERS

Dir. John Michael McCarthy / 1997

Martians, rock 'n' rollers and vamps run around and cause trouble.

THEY WANTED MEAT SO THEY ATE THE FLOWER CHILDREN

A lot of cool-looking or think-they're-cool-looking folks fill the screen. The women are shapely, retro-style pin-up types who seem to have a problem keeping their clothes on their bodies. Garage punk band Guitar Wolf makes their big screen debut as laughing, beer-guzzling aliens that can shoot lasers out of their eyes. Some movies work hard to look like old exploitation/horror flicks but spend most of their time mocking the very style they're emulating, which makes no sense. *The Sore Losers* has nothing but respect for its inspirations. You can tell Mr. McCarthy really loves all the stuff being referenced, and tells his story with a strong, distinct style, using off kilter camera angles and vivid colors. Musicians Jack Oblivion and M'ike Maker also star. (*BC*)

SOUP FOR ONE

Dir. Jonathan Kaufer / 1982

A New York filmmaker documents his troubles with the opposite sex.

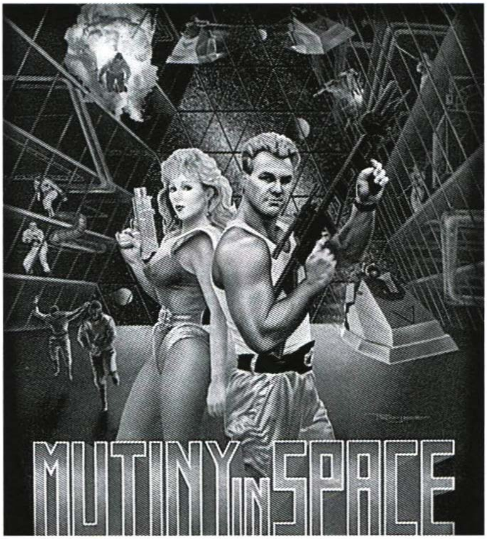
Saul Rubinek (*True Romance*) and Gerrit Graham star in this weird, surprisingly raunchy independent film. It opens with a joke about mice dancing to disco and the laughs pretty much stop there. Well, OK, it's almost entertaining later when Michael Jeter (*The Fisher King*) eats a flower. Things get frustrating when Rubinek stalks and pesters a woman into dating him. She finally caves in. Maybe it's because he demands to change her son's diaper. Make sure to cover your kid's ears when a man asks for overweight Vietnamese lesbian movies at a porn shop. Have your child wait in the lobby for the long scene of Rubinek and Andrea Martin trying out various sexual positions. Better yet, just take your kid and leave. Punks show up in front of CBGB and a guy with a pink bolt on his head appears at a roommate referral agency. Things become very serious at the end. They probably figured the film wasn't funny anyways so they might as well make a crappy romantic drama. (*BC*)

SPACE MUTINY

Dirs. David Winters & Neal Sundstrom / 1988

Welfare sci-fi.

This is a true low-budget film. The opening credits are done on a home computer. The sets look as if they were made for a high school play. Other parts of the film are shot in what must be an old factory or boiler room. The futuristic clothes look like aerobics gear with shoulder pads. Cameron Mitchell is the only semi-star here and his beard is so fake you'll swear that after shooting he went straight to the mall to ask kids what they want for Christmas. All of the space battles are clips from *Battlestar Galactica*. One evil henchman has a greasy, villainous mohawk. This movie goes by quick...even quicker in fast-forward. (*BC*)



SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

aka THE UNGODLY

Dir. Raphael Nussbaum / 1991

Evangelists moves into a house that's already occupied by Satan.

Faith healer Jonah Johnson and his wife are run out of a Southern town after he impregnates his umpteenth hillbilly. Relocating to LA, the couple purchases a dilapidated home at 666 13th St., complete with a haunted toilet and graffiti of swastikas and the word "PUNK." On their first night, Jonah is awakened by noises downstairs. When he investigates, he's grabbed by Hollywood scum named Punk and Maggot, but the Johnsons turn the tables and beat the invaders unconscious. A cop arrives on the scene and says, "I saw that punker van out front and thought I should check in on you." Things get stranger as renovations begin. After the devil eats one of the workmen in the basement, the Johnsons find themselves rooming with evil incarnate, so they convert their home into a Church of Satan. Hijinks ensue, including the occult suicides of the aforementioned punks. Did I make it clear that this is intended to be a comedy? No? Neither did the screenwriters. (*ZC*)

SPICE WORLD

Dir. Bob Spiers / 1997

The Spice Girls star in their very own motion picture
about the wild lives of celebrities.

Back in the '60s, The Beatles made *A Hard Days Night*. It was a showcase for their natural comedic timing and musical talents. You'll get neither here. Watching this, one feels that the girls don't even talk to each other between takes. The Fruit of the Loom guys have better chemistry. The Spice Girls preach girl power while wearing skimpy outfits that will make grandma cry. They ride around in a giant Union Jack bus with an interior that looks like the set of *The New Monkees*. What little humor that can be drained from this film is lost on any U.S. audience because most of the jokes have to do with British celeb cameos. There is however George "Norm from *Cheers*" Wendt for us Yanks to yuk at, even though he looks like he acted at gunpoint. It's also nice to see Roger Moore in such good shape. His scenes must have been shot after all the film's budget was spent because they look like they were filmed in a garage. Unfortunately for those of us writing this book, there is a brief shot of a man with a silver spiked mohawk dressed as a *Road Warrior*-type villain. He has terrible facial hair and awkwardly dances at a club.

Legendary South African leader and anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela once said that meeting the Spice Girls was the happiest day of his life. Nelson, you're shittin' me. (*BC*)

SPLATTER: THE ARCHITECTS OF FEAR

Dir. Peter Rowe / 1986

A how-to guide to creating convincing gore effects
and/or surviving an atomic gender war.

Splatter confounds on multiple levels. Primarily, it's a dryly-narrated course in latex gore production, with a virtual step-by-step instructional format explaining how to replicate the destruction of everything from forearms to eyeballs to entire craniums. But rather than showcase clips from actual horror movies utilizing these effects, the filmmakers create a manufactured sci-fi production specifically for this video. In it, hordes of amazon warriors stalk irradiated, cannibalistic mutants through various warehouses, each segment climaxing in a gutblasting set piece. The she-warriors are heavily armed, scantily clad and marginally new wave in the most hackneyed post-apocalyptic tradition. *Splatter* is hosted by a one-eyed, slavering cannibal named Fang and released by Dogg Bronko Video. (*ZC*)

SPLENDOR

Dir. Gregg Araki / 1999

Veronica has a hard time deciding between square-jawed sensitive
nerd Abel and square-jawed fashion-punk drummer Zed,
so she humps them both.

The '90s were an enchanted age, when everyone was at their most educated regarding the risks of venereal disease, and every independent film featured at least one scene where strangers have animal sex on the floor of a public restroom. Veronica takes this degrading plunge in the film's first five minutes, grinding with a bronze meathead musician 20 minutes before falling for a neurotic author. Against all logic or morality, she opts to carry on both relationships simultaneously, as well as zeroing in on a wealthy co-worker.

Though this movie is packaged as a light dating comedy for the college set, Araki's practiced glorification of all things hoggish and decadent is more repulsive than ever before. The protagonist's situation is treated as a progressive, wild-n-quirky way to enjoy dating, foregoing closeness and commitment in order to conveniently indulge her insatiable ego and libido at the same time. This mindset collapsed on the hippies in the swingin' '70s and sure as hell fails to entertain on film now. Save the $2.50 rental charge...if you want to see self-loathing young people who use sex to make each other feel like shit, just step outside your house. A bone-shattering thumbs down to talentless hack Araki for constantly romanticizing the greatest failings of our species. Where his previous work simply made me want to kill myself, *Splendor* practically sent me on a suicide spree. (*ZC*)

SPY HARD

Dir. Rick Friedberg / 1996

Agent WD-40 (Leslie Nielsen) must track down the evil General
Rancor (Andy Griffith) and stop him before he destroys the world.

From the writer/director of *Pray TV* comes this zany spoof of James Bond films and various other '90s movies (*Sister Act; In the Line of Fire; Pulp Fiction; Home Alone*). Some people would say it's a Zucker/Abrahams/Zucker rip-off, but this is more like a *Cracked* magazine to their *Mad*, and is one of the funniest movies of its decade (admittedly a dry well). Leslie Nielsen is the only actor that comes to mind who had a second phase of leading man popularity at the age of 60!

The movie opens with a credit sequence and song by "Weird Al" Yankovic that ends with his head exploding. From then on, it's anything goes. Famed nerd Eddie Deezen gets a gallon of spit thrown in his face. A punk with a red mohawk, another with green hair and a skinhead give bus driver Ray Charles a hard time when they cut the brakes on his vehicle. Many more cameos include Hulk Hogan, Dr. Joyce Brothers, Mr. T, Robert Culp and Fabio, just to name a few. Every actor is brilliant and having fun. Just look at award-winning actor Charles Durning, who's disguised as a chair while Nielsen farts on him. At least enjoy Pat "Mr. Miyagi" Morita playing a gay waiter named Brian. Most importantly, Andy Griffith plays the supervillain and hasn't had a role this interesting since *A Face in the Crowd*. It's fun to watch the *Matlock* star ham it up for a change. His first scene has him wearing a beard and beating up a mime. Later, he loses all of his limbs and, to his great irritation, is hurtled into outer space. Not even in his finest hour could Tarkovsky have created such striking imagery. (BC)

THE SQUEEZE

Dir. Roger Young / 1987

An unlikeable crumb runs from some scum.

Harry (Michael Keaton) is a struggling, self-destructive "new wave artist"... meaning he makes stegosauruses out of televisions. Wrapped up in a double-cross involving severed thumbs, he bounces around between nightclubs and dark alleys. He eventually stumbles across a long line of dance chumps waiting to enter a high-class fashion dive in their skull-painted vests and other punk-by-numbers costumery. Meat Loaf manages to stink up the film further with his considerable talent vacuum. Please enjoy the VHS cover, humorously depicting Keaton crushed between the crumbling Twin Towers. (*ZC*)

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

Dir. Joel Schumacher / 1985

Rich white people got problems too.

...I'm going to use my credit card to pay for a giant Billy Idol mural in my apartment. If I work for the Republican senator, I'll be able to buy that nice couch. But I want the bigger table at the fancy restaurant to impress that doctor I want to date. I did too much coke. Watch out, I got a nose job. Should I go to law school or medical school? Dang, the affair with that banker didn't work out...

This is a movie that invites us to care about wealthy young adults and their petty bullshit. Rob Lowe blows on a saxophone during a costume party where one of the attendees dresses up in a sleeveless denim jacket and has red streaks in his hair. The combined words "Rob Lowe" and "saxophone" should hopefully be enough to steer you clear of this aimless Brat Pack fecal bouquet. (*BC*)

THE STABILIZER

Dir. Arizal / 1984

An unbelievably explosive Indonesian
anti-budget white-knuckle action massacre.

The Stabilizer of the film's title is Peter O'Brian, a permed, humorless American with a relentless bloodlust for international justice. His nemesis, Rainmaker, is also a White Devil, but with an additional penchant for drugs, misogynistic extermination and mohawked, leather-clad flunkies (one of his right-hand men could easily pass for a South Seas Mr. T). This is an unrelenting low-income catalog of pyrotechnics and impossible violence, with the filmmakers content to throw in the occasional toupee gag or human oddity to keep action-proof jaws gaping. Highlights include a death by weed-whacker, the cleat-stomping of a newlywed bride and a seaside entertainer ripping a live lizard to shreds with his teeth. The same performer reappears in a dual role offering a similar scene, though his second reptile-chomping performance sees his skills honed to new levels of nauseating savagery. Directed by the mysterious Arizal, an Indonesian filmmaker who labored consistently from the '70s through the end of the century with releases like *Special Silencers*, in which chemically-created trees burst from the chests of freedom fighters. Though each of his handful of English-language films are violent and repulsive, *The Stabilizer* can easily boast the most disgusting indignant-spit-in-the-face ever captured on camera. Do *not* be eating vanilla pudding at the 1:16:05 mark. (*ZC*)

STARSTRUCK

Dir. Gillian Armstrong / 1982

A plucky young lady jumps up and down in front of a microphone.

Aspiring singer Jackie (with a bone in her day-glo red hair) and her teenage manager/cousin Angus (with a poofed up blue 'do) nab her a gig at Australian new wave nightclub The Lizard Lounge. The venue's regulars are high-art synchronized rug-cutters bathed in fluorescent light and roboticized excitement. Jackie kicks off her debut performance in a red kangaroo costume, but quickly sheds it to perform herky-jerky acrobatics. Obviously, the audience goes wild. Angus stages outrageous publicity stunts to bring her further attention, including a doomed tightrope scheme that brings more emergency vehicles than reporters. Soon enough, she's captured the public eye, and ends up booked for a TV spot that just might help her save the family pub.

Starstruck is relentlessly upbeat, a grinning whirlwind of white teeth, saturated colors and unbreakable spirits. Though some of its junior musical numbers temporarily transform it into an updated cross between *Grease* and *Oliver*, it's the only Australian film with an all-male Busby Berkeley-inspired Bathing Beauties number, and that alone legitimizes its existence. (*ZC*)

STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME

Dir. Leonard Nimoy / 1986

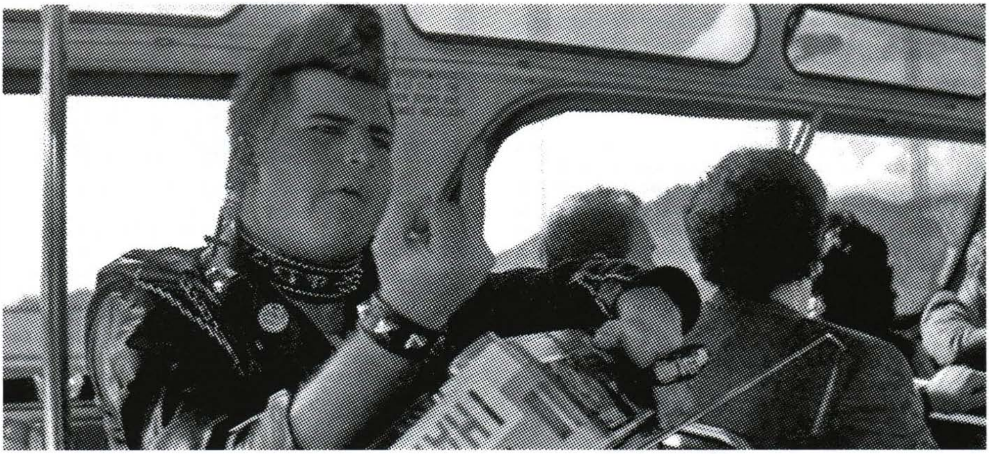
Ending the story arc started in Part II, our familiar heroes
travel back to the '80s to save some whales.

Not as bad as that synopsis sounds. Some fans actually like this movie the most. The comedic element is defiantly pushed here, much more than in the other films, and it works. Who wouldn't be at least mildly amused to see Captain Kirk shout, "Double dumbass on you!" at a reckless driver. A kid on the bus is one of the most beloved movie punks of all time. It's a short moment, yet this character was featured very prominently on French posters for the film. He was played by Kirk Thatcher, who was surprisingly an associate producer on this project. He begged Nimoy to let him play the punk and was even allowed to write the song "I Hate You," which the character blasts on his boombox. Captain Kirk is annoyed by this loud music and asks him to turn it down. The punk gives him the finger, prompting Spock to pull a Vulcan neck pinch on the red-mohawked nuisance. The kid passes out, hitting the volume on his stereo with his head, turning the music off. Everyone on the bus cheers.

The producers were going to use a non-punk song for this scene, but Thatcher demanded they use a genuinely abrasive track. When the producers whined that they couldn't afford the Sex Pistols or other familiar acts, Thatcher wrote the song himself:

"Just what is the future?
The things we've done and said.
Let's just push the button.
We'd be better off dead!
And I hate you!
And I berate you!
And I can't wait to get to you...
The sins of all the fathers,
Being dumped on us – the sons.
The only choice we're given is:
How many megatons?
So I eschew you!
And I say "SCREW YOU"!
And I hope you're blue too!
We're all bloody worthless,
Just greedy human scum,
The numbers all add up
To a negative sum...
And I hate you!
And I hate you!
And I hate you...too!"

The song was later used again in *Back to the Beach*. Also, watch for a performance from Jane Wiedlin of The Go-Go's as a Federation member. (*BC*)



KIRK THATCHER

"Punk on Bus" – *STAR TREK IV*

KH: I grew up in LA and I was part of the middle-class punk movement. I wasn't living on the streets but I really liked the aesthetic and the rebelliousness. The thing that set punk apart was that it had a sense of humor about it. It was fun... more ironic than nihilistic, as opposed to something like goth that takes itself too seriously. I think it grew out of the fact that we all thought we were going to be destroyed in a nuclear blast [laughs]. The lyrics in the song from *Star Trek IV* were about living under the threat of absolute annihilation. When we shot the thing, I just had a rhythm in my head and was tapping it out on the boombox on the bus. There wasn't any music playing at all, so Shatner and Nimoy were just raising their voices over nothing, shouting, "Excuse me! Excuse me!" So we were shooting with no song and just figured we'd find something later.

Later, when we were in editing, Paramount made some deal where they were going to put Duran Duran or, God, Flock of Seagulls or something in that scene. These were the types of bands they were bringing up. I was 23 years old at the time, and Leonard Nimoy listened to me when I said, "That's not the right music. That's not what a punk guy on the bus is going to be listening to." I figured they weren't going to go get a Dead Kennedys song, so I said I could just write them something. I'd had a band in high school that had done funnier punk stuff, like The Toy Dolls or Fear. I kind of had a song in my head and they said, "Go ahead. If we like it, we'll put it in." The film's sound designer Mark Mangini played guitar, I had all the lyrics, so we recorded it on Saturday over in the sound department. Nimoy came by later that day, and he smiled and said, "Wow. That's horrible," but had a big smile on his face. So it was about three days from when we asked if we could do it until we had a song in the movie.

DAM: You worked in production…how did you end up with that role?

The thing about the punk part was that it was initially just supposed to be some guy listening to a boombox. And I'd brought up that it could be a punk guy playing something really raw, and I asked if I could possibly play it. Nimoy said, "I don't know…" But I already had the orange hair. I mean, I never had a full mohawk like I did in the movie, but I had the buzzcut with the dyed-orange top. I made my own outfit, based on a drawing I'd done of what I thought the guy would look like. I went out and picked up a cheap leather jacket, some band pins, a dog collar [laughs] down on Melrose Ave in LA, which was the place to pick up your punk accoutrements at the time. Bracelets, chains, iron cross earrings. Then it was over to makeup to get the hair together and all that. So I remember getting the whole thing together and dressing up as a test to show Leonard what I'd look like, and I walked out on the Paramount lot. I got a lot of smiles, people took some pictures. I remember DeForest "Bones" Kelley, who had a very dry sense of humor, walks out of his trailer, looks me up and down, and says, "Nice shoes."

We had a blast. There are photos of us just mugging on the bus. Tourists were taking pictures of Kirk, Spock and the punk. I was never recognized on the street because I didn't look like that in my daily life, but I have been recognized by name.

SUDDEN STOPS ARE
SOMETIMES

Several years after the movie, I was paying for something at a drug store. The checker took my card, and said, "Oh my gosh. You have the same name as this guy who was in *Star Trek IV*." And she was such a Trekkie that knew that the punk actor had written the song and everything. It was such a shock that it took me a minute to say, "Oh…that was me!"

The track was used in *Back to the Beach* too. Was it ever released as an album?

The song has never been on vinyl. They made a *Star Trek IV* soundtrack LP, were going to put the song on it…but they never did. Bands have contacted me over the years and asked me if they could perform the song. It's fine with me! We ended up doing music for other movies… there's a Joe Dante film where we had a song that included lyrics about "foaming fetal cheese." [Laughs.]

Is it strange to you that your scene has become such a huge moment for fans?

Leonard went to the premiere in Russia and said the biggest audience response during the whole film was the punk rocker moment. Apparently, punks had just come into Russian culture a year or two earlier and had become something of a problem, so Spock's treatment of the punk got a standing ovation or something. In the *Star Trek* universe, I think I'm the only character that got to flip off Kirk and Spock.

There was some *Star Trek* movies poll recently and the punk moment came in number three. It's crazy. I could win the Nobel Prize and my gravestone would still say "PUNK ON BUS IN *STAR TREK IV*."

STARSHIP

Dir. Roger Christian / 1985

Fledgling interstellar failure from the director of *Battlefield Earth*.

The credits and poster art brazenly inform you of this film's most exciting aspect: "Original music by Tony Banks of Genesis!" This ballyhooed score is hilariously standard, like three-second snippets of the opening themes of every sci-fi blockbuster of the past four decades, Scotch-taped together and run through a Nintendo. If that doesn't get your pulse racing, the plot doesn't stand a chance.

On a desert planetoid, a governmental army of obsidian robotic football players face off against teen protesters, one of whom is a concussed street punk in an Anti-Nowhere League T-shirt. Children of the future are schooled by incredibly creepy dwarf androids, and protected by a young hero-of-the-people named Lorca. When the government 'bots murder his mother, Lorca and his mechanized pal Grid head out to gather their comrades and escape the ravaged world. The crippled technology of the so-called future is sure to incite many questions from the viewer. The robots have eyelids and are programmed to feel fear. Kids play Galaga and listen to '80s pop at the local youth hangout. A hologram of a new wave diva sings a song while her spiked collar gleams in the dim light. Majestic!

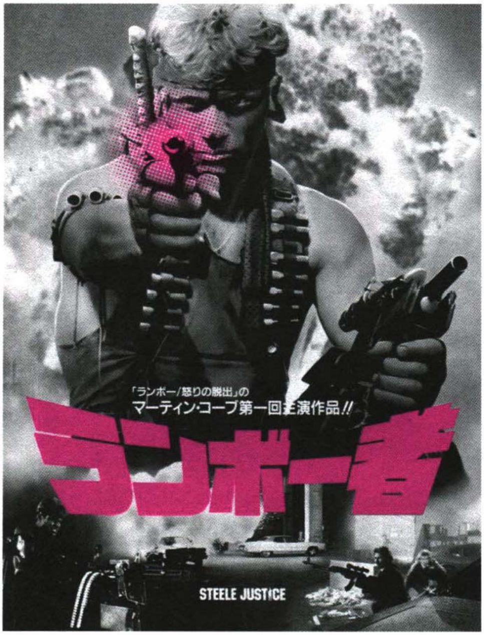
A drab, clunky addition to your post-*Star Wars* trashbag. (*ZC*)

STEELE JUSTICE

Dir. Robert Boris / 1987

Vividly violent Vietnam veteran vengeance.

The Mekong: 1975. Lieutenant John Steele (Martin Kove) is a tough-as-grenades soldier with a pet snake named Three-Step that hangs


「ランボー/怒りの脱出」の
マーティン・コーブ第一回主演作品!!
ランボー者
STEELE JUSTICE

limply around his neck. Steele ends up on the bad side of the shady Soong Kwan and is treated to a torso full of bullets. Instead of dying, he leaves Kwan with a knife in his chest. Ten years later, Steele is a divorced, unemployed drunk who's lost everything...except Three-Step, whom he carries in a duffel bag. Our charmless lead gets in a bar brawl and is sprung from jail by his "Asian Task Force" buddy and fellow vet Lee. The two barely have time to rekindle their decades-long camaraderie before vicious drug cartel The Black Tiger wipe out Lee and his wife, leaving Steele no choice but to exact vengeance. But who's behind the dreaded Black Tiger gang? Could it be...Soong Kwan? Yes.

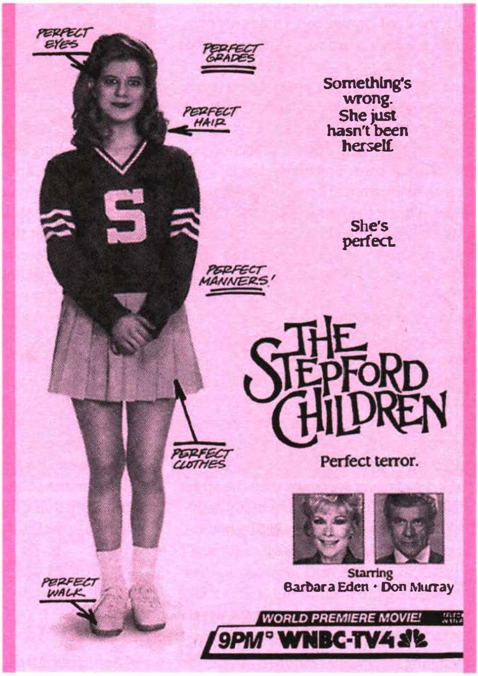
Steele beats up a man at a funeral, chases horses down a city street and takes a bath with the door open. A true man, but not so much so that he's above sitting shirtless on a child's swing set with a pink sweater draped around his neck. One plug-ugly would-be assassin has chumpy facial tattoos and a Lego man haircut, but the true punk sighting is a bleached, spiked spazz who busts a fruity move during a displaced music video sequence that ends in some lighthearted homicide. Look for brilliant character actor Ronny Cox and several familiar faces from *Big Trouble in Little China* including Peter Kwong, who also played in the earth-shattering evil punk actioner *Never Too Young to Die* (see pg. 239). *(ZC)*

THE STEPFORD CHILDREN

Dir. Alan J. Levi / 1987

A sinister men's club replaces their wives and children with well-behaved duplicates.

This is one of three *Stepford* TV movies inspired by Ira Levin's original *Stepford Wives* novel and the hit 1975 film adaptation. The movies are unrelated but all feature the same premise and, in this case, the Stepford husbands don't "fix" just their wives, they also convert their kids! Laura and Steven Harding (Barbara Eden and Don Murray) move their family from the city to a suburban town called—you guessed it—Stepford. Their son David (Randall Batinkoff) wears sunglasses with a denim jacket and dribbles a basketball in the kitchen while their daughter Mary (Tammy Lauren) hangs out with punks! She even lets a few of the filthy things in the house!! Mary's got frizzed-out '80s hair and acts flat-out stoned as she drops her schoolwork on the floor. Her boyfriend seems a little older than the average high school student and has sleazy facial hair, earrings and a studded denim jacket. There are two other girls as well, one with a black leather jacket and mohawk, and the other with a torn red T-shirt and wrist studs. Mom dismisses it all as minor "kids-will-be-kids" shenanigans but Dad is fed up, secretly plotting to Stepfordize the whole bunch after they load up the station wagon and head upstate.



Meanwhile, an annoying new wave Stepford child named Kenny (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*'s John Cameron Mitchell) is about to get the royal alteration treatment. Kenny has a loud black-and-white billowy shirt (with an abstract design based on penguins), long earrings, wrist studs, red parachute pants, combat boots and white streaks in his hair. His dad takes him out on a fishing boat and they are met by another vessel filled with members of the sinister Men's Association who paddle the little snot off to exchange for a better behaved replacement.

The Hardings arrive in Stepford and the town is strictly squaresville. Steven loves the old-fashioned feel but the rest of the

Hardings aren't so happy. For their first day of school, David and Mary don't wear anything particularly outrageous but, compared to most of their classmates, they look like a couple of freaks. Laura makes friends with Sandy (Sharon Spelman), but is suspicious when her friend suddenly changes and, as Laura puts it, "has bundt cake where her brains used to be." The Hardings eventually figure out what us viewers knew as soon as we saw the title of the film. Mary and David subvert the Men's Association's agenda by sabotaging a school dance. She replaces big-band music with a generic '80s hard rock instrumental, causing the kids to do a robot dance. This stunt gets her dragged off to the clone factory. While the film is predictable, it's still entertaining with a fun TV cast including James Coco as the school's home ec teacher, the hilariously named Dick Butkus as a basketball coach and, appropriately enough, the fake Ginger (Judith Baldwin) who replaced Tina Louise in those crummy *Gilligan's Island* TV movies. (*SH*)

STEPHEN KING'S WORLD OF HORROR

Dirs. Rick Morchesono & John Simmons / 1986

America's foremost cross-eyed goof theorizes on the nature of fear in literature and film.

Interspersed throughout this lazy made-for-TV documentary are clips from movie adaptations of King's work, inexplicably interrupted by a brick of completely unrelated Troma film previews. Among these is the teaser for the mutoid-punk-laden *Class of Nuke 'Em High*, in which several of the film's cartoonish Cro-Mag scuzzoids appear. Troma magnate Lloyd Kaufman gives a fumbling interview before the doc's focus mercifully shifts back to a lesser evil: the bucktoothed, monobrowed Lord of the Mass-Market Macabre. (*ZC*)

STEWARDESS SCHOOL

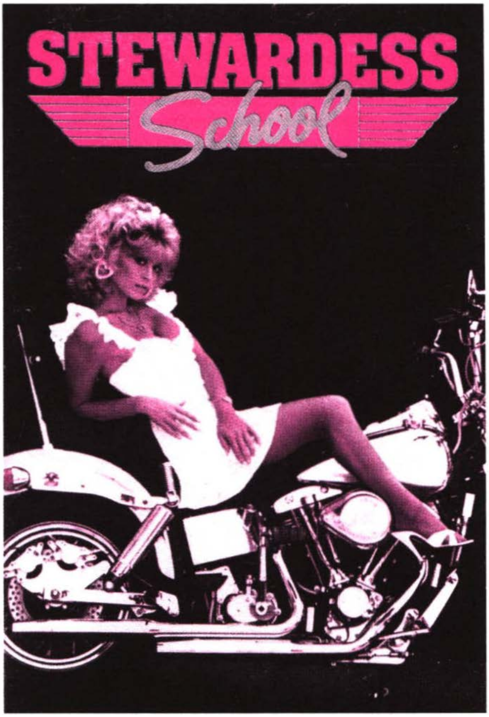
Dir. Ken Bloncato / 1986

Philo's glasses are too thick to allow him to be a pilot, so his buddy George decides they should go to Stewardess College.

There are crazy '80s comedies, and there are *CRAAAAAAAZY* '80s comedies. This is the latter. Yeah, it's *Police Academy* with flight attendants, but it's so much more than that. Dirty, silly, random gags don't stop until the end credits arrive. Among the students are a female prowrestler, a prostitute, a punk, a gay man, a fat girl and Donnie Most (Ralph Malph from *Happy Days*) as George.

The story starts with the two failed pilot characters, but everyone is given the chance to shine. The first scene with George in the cockpit would never be attempted in these post 9-11 days. He's doing a test flight with his buddy Philo and decides to invite him to a party. Philo says that he'll attend and George does a little celebratory dance in the cockpit. His jiggling butt knocks Philo down, thus causing the plane to crash into a skyscraper. The image is incredibly shocking, and is the most disturbingly hilarious scene of the movie until the gay character gets his head stuck in an old woman's vagina. Another jolt comes when the fat character (Wendie Jo Sperber) oinks at a cake, and later saves everyone by getting her butt wedged in a torn hole on a damaged plane.

The punk in this movie is both baffling and brilliant. Corinne Bohrer (practically the queen of insane '80s comedies with major roles in *Surf 2* and *Joysticks*) plays wild child Cindy Adams, the girl with blue highlights on the right side of her hair and fuchsia on the left. In an often-used punk movie inaccuracy, Cindy dates and hangs out with Hells Angels-esque bikers. She rides up a flight of stairs to her dorm room on the back of boyfriend Snake's motorcycle. At a party, she asks the preppy crowd if they have any Twisted Sister, then puts on a tape from her personal collection of awesome new wave fusion jazz. The film's climax on a passenger plane features *The Jeffersons*' Sherman Hemsley as a blind man with a bomb under his seat. Just put down this book and watch the movie now. (*BC*)



STILL CRAZY

Dir. Brian Gibson / 1998

Rocking grandpas embarrass themselves across a continent.

Fictional career-suicide '70s UK group Strange Fruit reunites for no reason. Their manager books them for an Eastern European tour of cramped, hostile dives, including a dimly-lit bar packed with plaid-n-zippers punks rolling their eyes at the wrinkled glampas on stage. The group is on constant self-destruct, each member adopting a different vice in order to meet the fizzled rocker archetype. Bill Nighy and Stephen Rea give strong performances, but the fact is that no one needs a sappy British comedy to remind them that rock 'n' roll is dead & rotting. (*ZC*)

STILL SMOKIN'

Dir. Tommy Chong / 1983

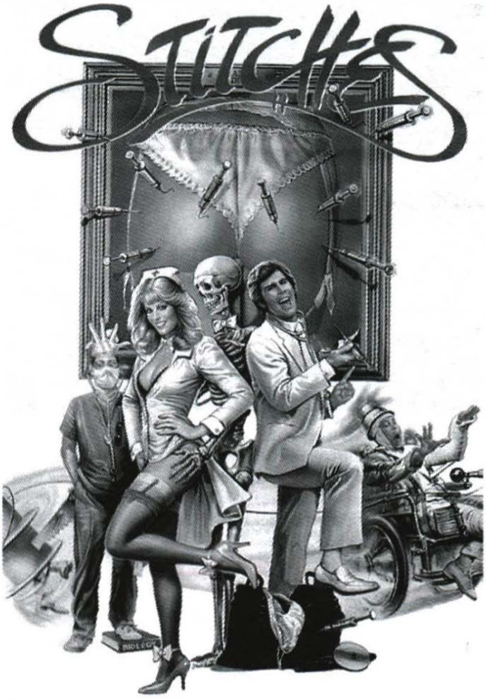
That crazy pot-smoking twosome flog a dead horse to a bloody fucking pulp.

Poor Cheech and Chong. This film looks like it was literally shot in a weekend. A thrown together piece of trash made to nab a quick buck off a fizzling comedy team that the '80s didn't want. Stale skits are dusted off and edited between lame concert footage and the duo schlepping around Amsterdam. A suddenly fauxhawked Cheech dons his Alice Bowie costume from their first movie. Not for nostalgic reasons, but more for out-of-ideas reasons. ZERO inspired moments here. Take, for example, their *Star Wars* parody "Queer Wars" about gays in space. These doped-up buddies are truly treading bongwater. (*BC*)

STITCHES

Dir. Rod Holcomb (as Alan Smithee) / 1985

Wacky antics at a medical school.



Our heroes will do anything to irk that crotchety old dean (Eddie Albert). At a fancy dress party, a punk band shows up in the back of a truck. The old people attending actually find the colorful youths amusing. This is the sort of '80s comedy where you'd expect the wacky guy to show up wearing 3D glasses for no reason. And he does. Albert is trying to do the Ted Knight thing here and almost pulls it off, but not quite; he looks too much like a kindly grandfather. Holcomb pulls the Smithee alias with the director's credit. Come on, it's not that bad. How could someone set out to make a dumb *Animal House* rip-off, shoot the boobie scenes, finish the picture and then say, "It's not the artistic achievement I set out to make!" Peter Bonerz proudly claimed *Police Academy 6* as his own, so what makes you so high and mighty, Rod? (*BC*)

STRANGE DAYS

Dir. Kathryn Bigelow / 1995

A virtual reality drug pusher gets embroiled in many a plot.

It's funny how the future world of *Strange Days* looks a lot like Lollapalooza fairgrounds circa 1993. The film was made in 1995, and is set in a "futuristic" 1999, so we're getting pure, amplified '90s slosh here. *Strange Days* is so beset with the era's earmarks—awful mix-and-match fashion, low-grade industrial rock music—that a certain detachment occurs during the course of the film. The viewer is subsumed in a detailed period piece and it becomes difficult to cull any enjoyment out of this blurry mess.

Lenny Nero (Ralph Fiennes) is a pusher of "playback," discs that induce first-person experiences of extreme sex and violence in the viewer. See, you put this squid on your head, which looks like a dollar store jelly shoe, and you "watch" a crime or lesbian sex scene or a teenager taking a shower, but the viewer isn't passive, he or she is an active participant (mentally) in the sequence. Blah blah blah. Much of the dialogue (written by one James Cameron) is pure exposition, explanations of the vast conspiracies, backstories, and technologies that the characters are involved with. It's the eve of the new millennium, Los Angeles is on the brink of total meltdown, and Lenny gets himself involved in some sort of murder mystery which involves a mediocre rapper named Jeriko One (Glen Plummer) and Faith (hosebeast Juliette Lewis), who he used to date. Also, Angela Bassett plays a martial arts expert/limo driver.

The dystopian future of *Strange Days* feels like a Nine Inch Nails music video. The plot is so overstuffed that the movie is pushed into a corner, mashed under the ridiculous script (nice work, JC). Making a film of this size within the action/thriller genre will inevitably dilute any message the filmmaker wants to send, and the message *Strange Days* transmits is mired in a softcore package of sex and violence. Can a film make a serious statement about voyeurism without implicating itself? The film tries and fails. *Everything* here is a misfire...especially Tom Sizemore's grunge wig.

Since *Strange Days* presents us with a fallen society, punks hang out in the nooks and crannies. At one particularly lamentable rock concert, Faith oozes and squirms on stage with her rock band while a sampling of punks stage dive, including a shirtless Fat Wreck Chords slob with a chain wallet and a techno spazz with pink hair. Front and center, a gothpunk with major liberty spikes and a rattail is taking it all in. There's a surplus of nasty dreadlocks to be seen in nearly every frame of the film.

Director Bigelow assaults the viewer with a relentless unpleasantness that yields little substance. Hollywood dilutes talent, so let's chalk this one up to the old movie meat grinder, keeping complexity at bay and extreme stupidity at the forefront. (*SC*)

STRANGELAND

Dir. John Pieplow / 1998

The stupidity of the Internet teams up
with the stupidity of body piercing.

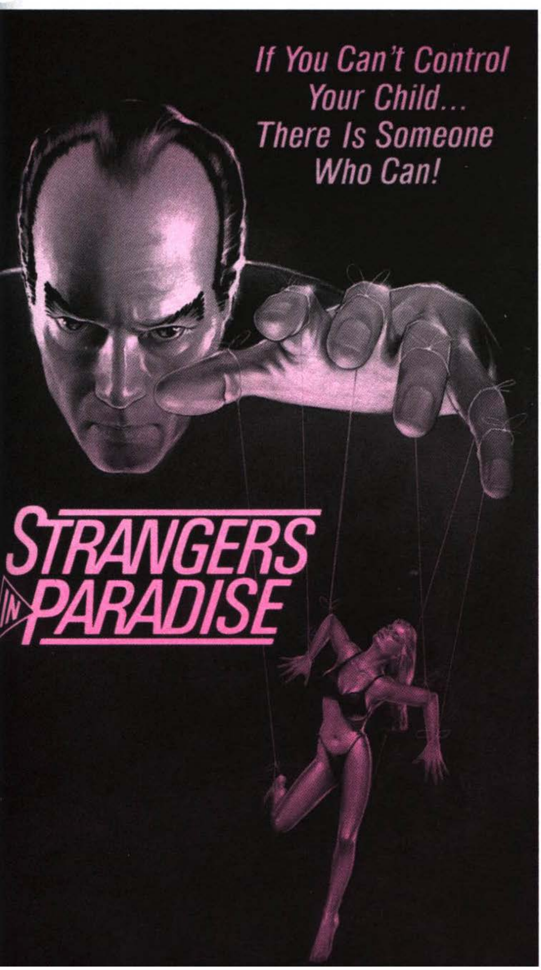
Twisted Sister frontman Dee Snider managed to surpass the ridiculousness of his '80s image by adopting the "modern primitive" lifestyle, aka shoving a few pounds of metal crap through his face. Reborn into a new decade as a bedazzled middle-aged man, he put his lack of dignity on broad display by writing and starring in this ham-assed unintentional comedy, a film that can possibly take partial blame for the modern scourge of *Saw* sequels and their inbred offspring. Snider plays physically-modified computer stalker (and *Exorcist* reference) Captain Howdy, who lures cyber-savvy teenagers to his basement and sews their lips shut before treating them to non-consensual genital piercings. His choice nightspot is goth-magnet dance club Xibalba, where wrist-slitting rich kids wiggle and writhe to industrial metal performed by wannabe non-humans in black-light facepaint. Scattered among the ecstasy-fueled turdbag clientele is a light smattering of liberty-spiked, studs-n-denim, faux-anarchy embarrassments; misplaced extras doing their damndest to get their razor-sharp haircuts in the scene's every frame. But after watching the finished film, they probably shaved their heads and entered a monastery. *Strangeland* was brazenly set up to spawn countless sequels, but the script's short-sightedly faddish idiocy was ahead of its time, so we'll just have to wait for the inevitable remake instead. CGI noserings guaranteed. (ZC)

STRANGERS IN PARADISE

aka THE HYPNOTIST

Dir. Ulli Lommel / 1984

A mesmerist is utilized in the war against new wave.



Nazi Germany: 1940. Powerful telepath Dr. Jonathan Sage (writer/director Lommel) is placed in cryogenic suspension to avoid working for Hitler (also played by Lommel!). He returns in the modern age of 1984, where a rainbow assortment of punks and new wavers roam suburban streets en masse, exhibiting an impossible array of visually assaultive fashion. Studded collars, geometric sunglasses, chartreuse beehives, combat boots...the works. Long-running LA punk casting agent Janet Cunningham even appears onscreen in street warrior gear, and performance artist Ula Hedwig is on hand, credited here as "Lesbian." An extensive montage features several parents' horrified reaction to their kids' appearance. Fortunately for them, the good doctor is defrosted and soon finds himself employed by the patriarchs of Paradise, CA in the hopes of transforming their fashion-wayward youth into functioning members of society. As Sage's techniques are unleashed, the teens perform a jarring series of aesthetic-appropriate musical numbers that gradually reflect the whitewashing of their brainpans. But it's not long before the doctor realizes the error of his ways and ends up taking on the parental Gestapo in a song-and-dance battle for punk fashion freedom.

Lommel can claim one of the most bizarre career trajectories in the business. He shot *Blank Generation* along with scum cinema epic *Cocaine Cowboys* in the late '70s. This was followed by smash-horror hit *The Boogeyman*, a film that seemed to steer him in a new directions towards the cheapie fright film outings of a burgeoning video age. *Strangers in Paradise* stands as Lommel's most bizarre and seemingly personal project of that era, and is a treasure chest of dollar-store inanity for anyone brave enough to take the leap. (ZC)

STRANGLER VS. STRANGLER

Dir. Slobodan Sijan / 1984

Overweight murderer vs. psychic rocker.

The lead singer of Serbian new wave band Idoli (The Idols) plays Spiro the telepath. He looks a lot like Waldo from the children's book series. Representatives of the Belgrade punk scene pogo to his hit song about strangling women. A cigarette-swallowing detective trails a murderer. Near the end, there's a gory ear dismemberment. Psychobilly singer Toni Montano is credited as "Punker #2." This is one out-of-hand, hard-to-find film that followed director Sibijan's 1983 feature *Kako sam Sistematski Unisten od Idiota,* which translates to "How I Was Systematically Destroyed by an Idiot." (BC)

STREET SMART

Dir. Jerry Schatzberg / 1987

An ultra-white journalist raises the ire of a vicious pimp.

Upright magazine reporter Jonathan Fisher (Christopher Reeve) decides to manufacture a scoop on imaginary flesh-pusher Tyrone to increase his journalistic value. He slums around Times Square to amass story content, but can't get a word out of the assorted trannies, hustlers and lowlifes, and is forced to falsify the entire piece. Somehow, the resulting piece of fiction catapults him into high press prominence. Meanwhile, untouchably harsh pimp Fast Black (Morgan Freeman) stomps a naked man in the crotch with fatal force. One of the prostitutes Fisher interviews is a member of Fast Black's stable, and Black becomes megalomaniacally convinced that the award-winning series of articles are about him. Fisher begins to reach further for literary glory as he reports from a cloud of hobos, a herd of hippies and a lone leather punk. Eventually, Fast Black takes him on an all-too-real tour of New York's most rugged corners.

Like *The Adventures of Milo and Otis*, their uneasy mismatched alliance leads to hijinks and adventure, but this film features a lot more prostitutes. Freeman's Oscar-nominated performance as the violent pimp is shocking and impressive, and this creative casting certainly works to *Street Smart*'s advantage. Unabashedly sleazy for all its critical acclaim, the film is no more perfect than its questionable characters, but is a hell of a lot stronger than it had to be. One warning: the "hard bop" opening theme music from Miles Davis will cause any self-respecting punk fan to run screaming from their television. (*ZC*)

STREET SOLDIERS

Dir. Lee Harry / 1991

Two packs of tender softies declare all-out war.

A couple fresh-faced members of letterman street gang The Tigers are suddenly attacked by four leather thugs in a skull-adorned Camaro. One of the lowlifes, a bleached oaf in a pink skull tank top, waddles comically while laughing like a 5-year-old girl. Blood is spilled, gang truces are broken and the battle is stopped short by karate math geek Charles...but not before a Tiger named Spud lies murdered. The stage is set for urban vengeance, and a self-abusive martial arts rock montage keeps things rolling as the bland heroes are developed. Later, a Caucasian version of the Fine Young Cannibals performs at the school dance before it erupts into an impassioned gang brawl.

Director Harry (*Silent Night, Deadly Night Part 2* and nothing else) may have once read an article about gang violence, but seems to piece the reality together the same way 18th-century scientists conjectured on the color of dinosaurs' skin. The Tigers are easily the sissiest gang in video history, possibly the only crew in moviedom who could get their asses beat by the guys from *Rumble in the Bronx*. Their first scene has their leader Max caressing his fellow member's face. One particularly brutal hood carries a rubber cobra at all times. The back alley graffiti in this would-be wasteland reads "TWINKlE MURDER" and "TWINKlE DEATH." Just when the film seems doomed to total emasculation, some oddly two-fisted telepathy makes a surprise appearance for the gripping climax. (*ZC*)

STREET TRASH

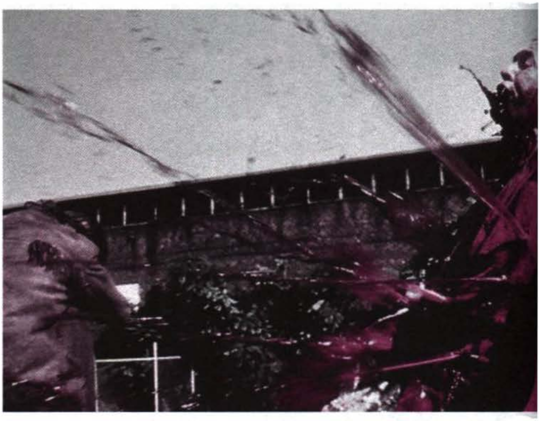
Dir. Jim Muro / 1987

A mysterious case of cheap booze causes colorful fatalities within the NYC hobo community.

The seedier cinema of the '70s provided us with unflinching displays of former unmentionables like rape, castration, drug abuse, necrophilia and general human filth. But it wasn't until a decade later that we were allowed to laugh at them. New York's most impressive contribution to the era's sleaze canon, *Street Trash* still manages to turn the stomach and wrench a laugh from the most cast-iron gore enthusiast.

1980 kicked off a golden decade for no-brow entertainment. As the video age emerged, so did the opportunity to provide crud-hungry audiences with an endless array of product. This sudden market for unrated pictures resulted in an avalanche of new industry hopefuls who clamored to release the most foul, debased work possible in the name of outdoing the competition. Upstart companies like Camp Video, Paragon, Wizard Video, Continental Pictures and the creatively-named VCR were just a few of the imprints cramming the horror, sci-fi and action shelves with crudely designed oversized VHS boxes, often featuring art that had nothing to do with the features themselves. In a race to catch the consumer eye, there were no rules.

A Vestron/Lightning Pictures release called *Street Trash* hit rental stores in '88, at the tail end of the initial shocker wave. Releases like *Return of the Alien's Deadly Spawn*, *Video Violence* and *Class of Nuke 'Em High* had already dazzled and disgusted courageous movie fans with unprecedented displays of inhumanity, but this one trumps them all.



Sure, the story is reasonably simple. Sibling transients Fred (Mike Lackey) and Kevin (Mark Sferrazza) lead an easy life of cheap booze and garbage fires, whittling away the days at the local junkyard while avoiding its hot-blooded owner (the immense R.L. Ryan) and psychotic hobo kingpin Bronson (Vic Noto). When the local liquor store unearths some expired bottles of Viper brand rotgut, the results are...messy. Anyone who takes as much as a sip dissolves into a quivering pool of acidic, technicolored goo. And at $1 a bottle, the local homeless contingent is ground zero for a literal meltdown. As the casualty count increases, so does the fury of Bronson, whose grip on the New York underbelly is threatened by his loss of manpower as well as the investigating police force.

Complications continue to arise until we're treated to a multilayered ensemble study that includes Mafiosi, background new wavers (including *Class of Nuke 'Em High*'s Chris McNamee), explosive combat flashback nightmares and gallons upon gallons of vagabond stew. A gurgling holocaust of rainbow fluids and rampant violence, the film manages to line up every nausea-inducing concept possible and knock each one out of the park. Limbs and lowlifes perpetually defile the screen, but beneath it all is the biggest shocker of all: *Street Trash* is a well-made and, yeah, downright respectable film. And, if anything, it's improved with age. The crumbling buildings and endless dead city blocks now recall the bygone New York we grew up fearing; a wasteland of muggers, ghouls and unmentionables that wandered the alleys with a hypodermic needle to shove in the eyeball of the next innocent passerby. Even the best comedic moments (many of them featuring the ad lib talents of the hilarious James Lorinz) are unsettling, as each shot and line of dialogue pummels us with the fact that the city is in ruin and no one gives a rat's ass.

Though the vagrant leads wallow in sleaze, the film's clean-cut employed types exhibit little more tact, managing to showcase greed, lust, viciousness and, in the case of R.L. Ryan's junkyard proprietor, an affinity for corpse sex. In fact, it's questionable that there's a single truly likeable character in the entire picture. The well-intentioned protagonists are mostly whiners and dunderheads who watch the film's endless atrocities without doing a thing to stop them. The only possible exception is "Bill the Cop," played by actual former NYPD officer Bill Chepil. Even though this was his only acting role, the rectangular Chepil infuses his part with a brilliant macho hostility that rockets the movie's testosterone level into the center of the sun. This is a peacekeeper who prefers fists over guns or words. When handed a typed report on the melted corpses, he stares at it blankly, then throws it back at his coworker. "Come on...I read like old people fuck." On a subsequent investigation, Bill bare-knuckles a criminal into critical condition, kicks the guy into a urinal trough, gags himself with his fingers and vomits a steaming heap of used food on the offender's face. This magnificent display is just the cherry on top of a steaming mountain of true, powerful, beautiful trash. (*ZC*)

STREETS

Dir. Katt Shea / 1990

Irritating suburbanite Sy attempts to save drug-addicted young prostitute Dawn from a crazed policeman.

Like *Suburbia, Streets* is a Roger Corman-produced drama focused on the trials of homeless youth, though this go-round is much more lurid in the hands of *Stripped to Kill* director Katt Shea. Lumley is a psychotic motorcycle cop with a bleached crew cut and an insatiable drive to murder teenage hookers. Once he sets his sights on Dawn (Christina Applegate), she only narrowly escapes with the help of schmuck Sy, who's defected from Santa Barbara to the much meaner Venice Beach in the hopes of becoming a rock star. As he pedals through Santa Monica on his bike, he plays the following ditty on the Casio keyboard strapped to his handlebars: "She's got psychic anorexia...I've got spiritual dyslexia...and my mom won't let me use the car." Yeeeowch. A girl with a bleached mohawk does a walk-on to hang out with a dope pusher that looks like he was kicked out of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Sentimental piano music plays every time an adolescent junkie shoots up. It also flares when Dawn tells Sy those three little words: "I can't read." He later does a luxurious faceplant during a high-speed chase.

Though overly sentimental, the film is recommended to anyone who enjoys seeing policemen get injured, which I assume includes anyone who purchased this book. Eb Lottimer is merciless as the homicidal officer, and maintains his effective coldness even during a scene where Lumley goes incognito, wearing studded leather and a satin jacket with "DANCE FEVER" embroidered across the back. (*ZC*)

STRIKEBACK

aka PUNK ANGELS aka COLD AS ICE

Dir. Carl Schenkel / 1981

A young ex-con swears revenge on a pack of motorbiking lowlifes.

Pretty boy prison inmate Balko stares at the graffiti on his cell walls, all scrawled in German except "NO FUTURE." Fed up with the incarcerated life, he unearths a hidden razorblade and slits his wrists, making a daring escape while en route to the hospital. Bullets fly past as he loses himself in the Berlin subways. He reemerges into a dismal club where a jangly combo pound out an anti-American sax-punk number. Backstage, he's reunited with old friends, but his enemies aren't far behind; two studded thugs appear just in time to get their faces smashed by Balko in an alley. This pair is just the beginning as he works his way up the criminal nemeses ladder, breaking as many heads as possible in spectacularly brutal fight sequences. He stops off for a reunion with his true love, enjoying a short taste of happiness before everything collapses in a hail of violence, bitter sex and loss. Balko's heartless biker foes are visually-jarring leather sadists, their leader a transdimensional-looking punk nightcrawler with an aerodynamic mini-beehive. After Balko is run over and his girlfriend raped and mangled, he armors up for an explosive kamikaze face-off with his rivals.

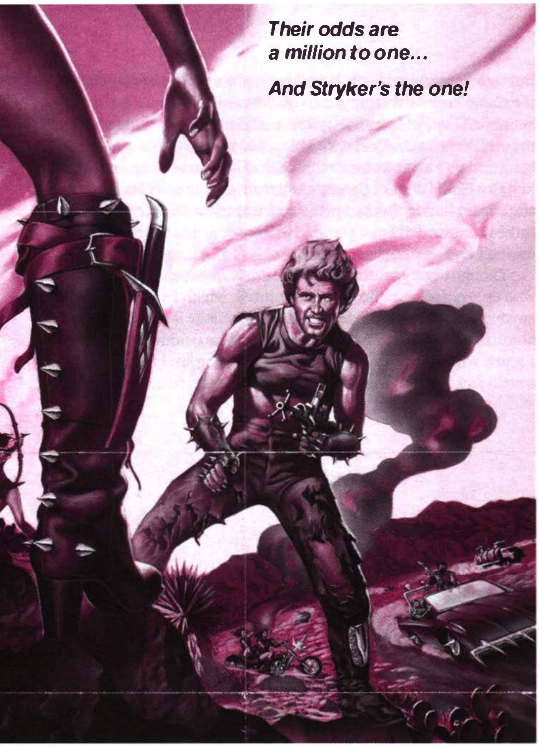
Strikeback is almost impossible to find, beautifully shot and the most violent European art drama you'll ever see. Punk and new wave are represented throughout, and their occasional gaudiness offers the few spots of brightness in an otherwise grim revenge tale. Bands from the film and soundtrack include Neon Babies, Rainy Day Women, Thorax Wach and Tempo. Blixa Bargeld of Einstürzende Neubauten appears as the musical entertainment at an art gallery, stomping, screaming and plunking on a toy piano. (*ZC*)

STRYKER

Dir. Cirio Santiago / 1983

Post-WWIII, the world's water supply has gone dry. A female leader of a survivor group is held captive by marauders, and Stryker is called in to make the rescue.

The action starts with a big-'80s-haired lass riding a trike and being chased by a gang of bad dudes in football pads. Once apprehended, they torture and fondle her for information on the whereabouts of a hidden water spring. Stryker (looking an awful lot like Dan Haggerty in a cowboy hat) drops in and blows the bad dudes up. It's not


Their odds are
a million to one...
And Stryker's the one!

long before she's captured and tortured again. This time she's taken back to the marauders' prison camp and beaten by an evil warlord with a hook hand. It seems like the experience is pretty brutal from the way she moans and squirms as her shirt is torn off. Repeatedly. Stryker continues to search and fight for the lady with some bow-toting amazon warriors. Did I mention they hook up with some Muppet-talking dwarfs along the way? Soon Stryker, the amazons and the robed hippie followers of the water cult come together to fight for survival.

Filmed entirely in what looks like a Californian quarry with a budget that allowed the set dressers to adhere vacuum hoses to the vehicles for futuristic effect, *Stryker* may not be the strongest of the post-apocalypse movie boom, but it still has quite a few good moments. The slower-than-slow-motion fight scenes tend to feel more like modern dance routines than action brawls. Borrowing much of the *Road Warrior* script (but changing gasoline to water... yup, that's pretty much it) and throwing a few spare tanks in the mix, the film kinda chugs along from one attack to the next with little to say. Dialogue is rare between most characters and when it occurs, it's usually a doozy. Punks are of the typical "new-wave-of-the-'80s-is-the-future" variety. If you have a few (dozen) beers and take this in, it's not a bad way to kill a Sunday afternoon. Filipino exploitation factory Santiago also directed the superior *Wheels of Fire* (included elsewhere in this book), and that's still not saying much. (*RF*)

STUDENT BODIES

Dirs. Mickey Rose & Michael Ritchie / 1981

A killer named The Breather stalks high school students.

A laugh-desperate product of the early '80s writers strike, and the first in an eternally declining tradition of slasher parodies. Produced by "Alan Smithee," the film aims to mock every convention of the then-and-still popular High School Sex = Death horror quickie, but the anticipated stabbing/boner gags have some heavy competition in comedic oddities like meowing dogs, car-driving dogs and people being slapped by (hot) dogs. One expendable recurring character is the Easter-colored, high fashion campus punk, band pins scattered across her lapel. She pops up at a pep parade, dances with old men and talks about incest. Though she does all of these things admirably, the film's true star has to be Malvert the brain-damaged janitor, played by a visually-challenging, underweight actor credited only as "The Stick." *Student Bodies* has gained a strong reputation, partly due to its innovative use of a flashing onscreen body count, and partly because people enjoy fart jokes and other crippled bullshit. (*ZC*)

The Body Count is
1

THE SUBURBANS

Dir. Donal Lardner Ward / 1999

A predictable tale of the rock 'n' roll fame rollercoaster.

When the members of one-hit wonders The Suburbans reunite for a spontaneous performance at the bass player's wedding, they are spotted by a young record executive who taps them to lead an '80s music revival. What follows is like an unauthorized sequel to *That Thing You Do*. It really feels like no thought went into the details of this film. For instance, the club where they have the reunion party is called The Punk Café, and, to go with its are-you-kidding-me name, it's just a stark white room staffed by girls with wild hair. Basically, everything about the movie is bland and, as the title warns, suburban. If there is a bright spot, it's the closing performance by A Flock Of Seagulls whose lead singer seems to have been replaced by Tony Little. (*LAF*)

SUBURBIA

Dir. Penelope Spheeris / 1984

LA street youths vs. the world.

Spheeris' narrative exploration of the punk struggle was a major inspiration for this book and—more importantly—countless displaced, alienated kids. Though it was produced by exploitation overlord Roger Corman, the film features a shockingly light amount of calculatedly controversial content, focusing instead on the actual challenges of early '80s teen outcasts. Here, punks are portrayed realistically and sympathetically. In most cases, the actors are indistinguishable from their characters, all played by actual show-going, hard-living teens selected from the clubs, record stores and streets of Los Angeles.

The film starts off juggling footage of their tragedies: Evan (Bill Coyne) walks away from his violent alcoholic mother's household, Sheila (Jennifer Clay) runs away from her sexually abusive dad, etc. Every one of the kids has been disappointed, betrayed or worse at home, and finds a far better family among one another, living in a squalid, abandoned tract unit dubbed the T.R. House (for "The Rejected").

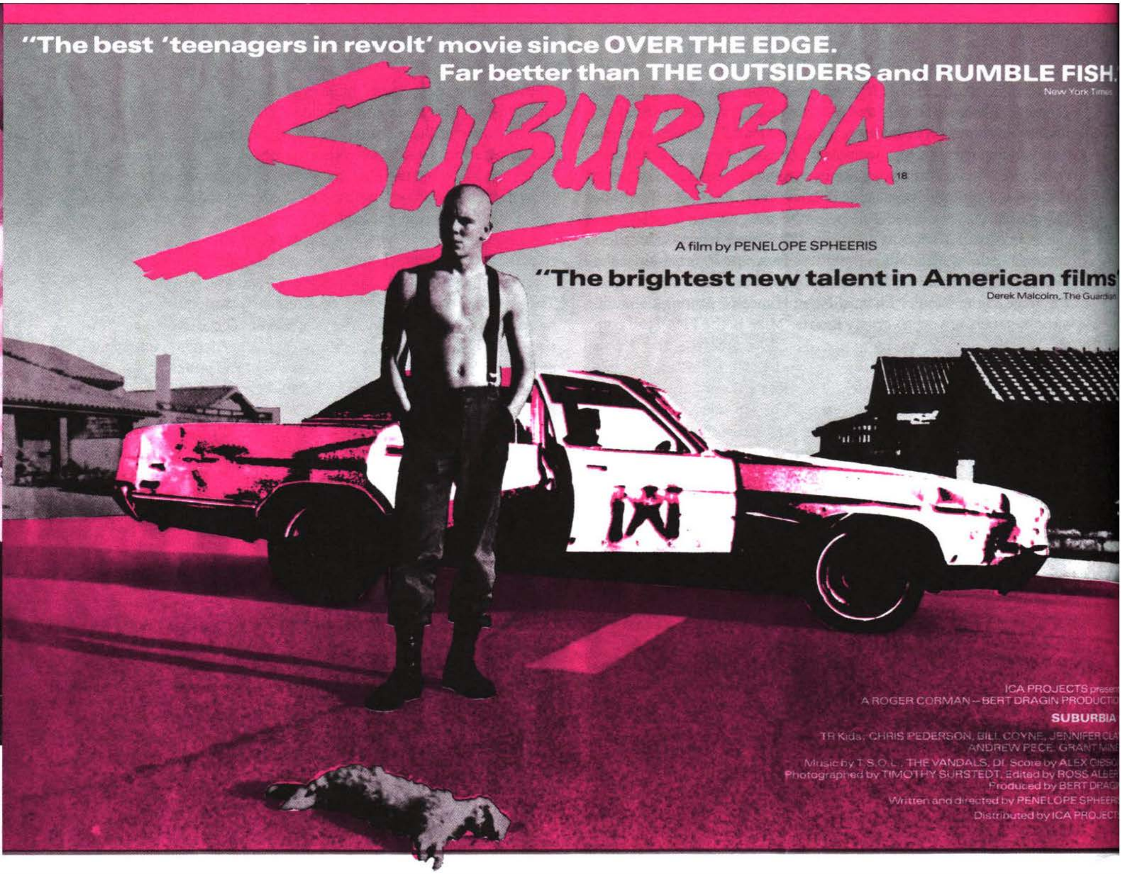
Evan's introduction to the group takes place when he wanders into a D.I. show. Mumbling, penniless frowners loiter against the outside walls while every variety of punk kid dogpiles at the foot of the stage to the band's "Richard Hung Himself." Among the audience members are proto-crusty Razzle (Mike B. the Flea), pill connoisseur Keef (Grant Miner), inseparable duo Mattie and T'resa (Maggie Ehrig and Christina Beck) and the hostile but likeable Skinner (Timothy O'Brien), who heartlessly humiliates an overly fashionable new waver foolish enough to attend the show. Also present is the household's default leader Jack Diddley (Chris Pedersen), who rescues Evan from a facedown semi-coma outside the club after he's covertly dosed by Keef: "You can't sleep on the grass... the snails will crawl on your face." The two of them stay the night in Jack's graffitied, half-busted car, discussing their personal problems in the morning:

JACK: My old man's a cop. My stepdad.
EVAN: God. Your stepdad's a cop?
JACK: That's not the worst of it...he's black.
EVAN: What a drag.

They head out to rescue Jack's friend Joe Schmo from the drudgery of his father's apartment. Joe packs and vacates without even grabbing the *Decline of Western Civilization* poster from his bedroom door, and parts from his dad with only a "later days." The trio returns to the T.R. House, where Sheila is getting her hair shorn off. The new inductees meet the other residents and get their "burn" from a homemade wire hanger branding iron bent into a crude T R. Joe hesitates, but Evan doesn't even blink as he has "no place else to go."

In the morning, the kids are woken by gunshots, as two unemployed, middle-aged washouts (Lee Frederick and *Decline* producer Jeff Prettyman) ride through the otherwise deserted neighborhood on a crusade to wipe out a scourge of wild dogs. Razzle runs to defend a couple mutts he's taken into his care, followed by Skinner, who quickly sparks a verbal face-off with the gun-toting losers. These two troubled dads resurface regularly throughout the movie, increasingly disgusted by the T.R. crew. The only other recurring adult is Jack's maligned stepfather, a particularly empathetic authority figure who genuinely cares about the punks despite their behavior. He even goes so far as to publicly defend them at a town hall meeting where the other citizens demand that the kids be run out of the city.

Jack, Skinner and Evan gather rations for the housemates by staging reckless raids, cruising middle-class communities for open garages and looting whatever they can lay hands on. The group celebrates an especially successful food heist with a T.R. backyard barbecue. As charcoal burns and beer is guzzled, a black-and-white TV drones a public access Furnitureland commercial featuring *Suburbia* producer Bert Dragin, an actual ad from the store he sold to finance the film. The kids eat and joke ("Guess what...*chicken butt*!!") and lay out their broken home epics. Razzle's is appropriately tragic, but comically delivered: "So I walked into my house and my father threw me down on the living room floor and held me there and my mother cut all my clothes off with a pair of scissors and they made me stand there while they burned 'em and I was NUDE."


"The best 'teenagers in revolt' movie since OVER THE EDGE.
Far better than THE OUTSIDERS and RUMBLE FISH."
New York Times
SUBURBIA
18
A film by PENELOPE SPHEERIS
"The brightest new talent in American films"
Derek Malcolm, The Guardian
ICA PROJECTS prese
A ROGER CORMAN—BERT DRAGIN PRODUCTIO
SUBURBIA
TR Kids: CHRIS PEDERSON, BILL COYNE, JENNIFER CLA
ANDREW PECE, GRANT MIN
Music by T.S.O.L., THE VANDALS, DI. Score by ALEX GIBSO
Photographed by TIMOTHY SURSTEDT, Edited by ROSS ALBER
Produced by BERT DRAG
Written and directed by PENELOPE SPHEER
Distributed by ICA PROJECT

After Evan's mom mows down a few innocents in a drunk-driving mishap, he semi-kidnaps his 7-year-old brother Ethan (Andrew Pece). When the boy learns he doesn't have to go to school anymore, he's overjoyed to be part of the punk household. He's properly inducted into the T.R. ranks—sans burn—and outfitted with army fatigues, a mohawk and war paint. By cover of night, the T.R.s roll up the sod in front of a suburban home and transport it to the mall, where they lay out a comfy grass blanket and watch the news through the TV store window. As the anchorman drones, Sheila tells Joe about her father's aggressive assaults, and punk romance blossoms. Their makeouts intensify at a TSOL concert that gets stalled when Skinner beats a fellow showgoer to the ground. Storming out in a rage, Skinner finds himself jumped by a couple pricks in a Camaro, but before they can inflict too much damage, Jack and the rest show up and lay waste to the two boneheads. Their anti-punk rage intensified, the pair returns to the club, knife the bouncer and damningly scrawl "T.R." on a telephone pole in his blood. Mattie and T'resa strip everyone of their T.R. armbands and the crew disappears from the crime scene. Back at the squat, the addition of a child has transformed the squat into a complete family. Sheila reads Hansel & Gretel for Ethan (as well as a few of the roommates), and despite the stabbing frame-up, things feel almost serene.

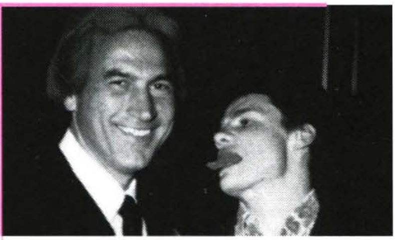
Naturally, it doesn't last. Jack's stepdad stops by in civilian wear to peacefully warn the kids that their T.R. days are coming to an end. His words fall on resistant ears ("I hate cops...to the max"), but he eventually gets through after emptying his wallet in exchange for their attention. Unfortunately, his good intentions come too late. Local "concerned citizens" have decided that teenage punks are a perilous threat, and invade the house following a raging Vandals concert to intimidate the kids into submission. This sets off a series of confrontations and tragedies that lead to an inevitably heartbreaking climax.

Spheeris manages a difficult balance, pulling off crushing crises and genuine humor while keeping the film consistently, naturally realistic. According to the director, the movie's more outrageous scenes (including the notorious dog vs. baby attack) were based on actual occurrences. The film features no major power plays, few plot constructs...just the story of a group of kids trying to make their place. The characters she creates are refreshingly imperfect, sympathetic despite their casual, uneducated racist or homophobic zings. Much credit can also go to the cast of young non-actors; very few of them exhibit traditional dramatic skills, which is what makes them ideal for their roles. A formally-trained actor would have thrown things dangerously off-balance; the authenticity of every member of T.R. is more valuable to this story than any Oscar-winning performance. The T.R. House itself is even impressively authentic, trashed in a way that will elicit a nostalgic sigh from any viewer who has endured punk house living.

Suburbia was the best possible project to follow Spheeris' documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization*. The spotlight shifts from the bands to the people that actually comprised the scene, and held together the sometimes unstable framework that allowed punk to flourish as a lifestyle rather than a fashion statement. It was released at a time when Hollywood had become comfortable with its manufactured variation on the culture, packing party comedies and topless slasher films with kamikaze mohawked goofbags. Spheeris' masterpiece took the opposing route, wiping those clownish depictions away from an established faction of society that few filmmakers had attempted to accurately represent even in documentary, much less fiction. The results may not have made box office history, but they were successful in that *Suburbia* is not only the best movie ever made about punks, but one of the great films of all time. (*ZC*)

BERT DRAGIN

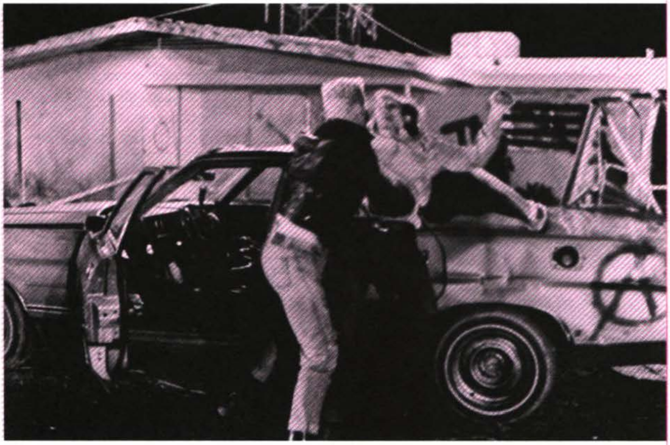
Producer – *SUBURBIA ('84)*; Director – *SUMMER CAMP NIGHTMARE*



BD: I'm from Cleveland, Ohio and I had a furniture business that I sold in 1981 to General Cinema. I figured if they can go into the furniture business, I can go into the movie business. I had done a lot of community theater in my spare time there, and I'd loved it. I was too young to retire, and my wife said, "Why don't you go to California and get into the movie business?" So I did.

I moved here and while I was looking for a project, someone handed me the screenplay for *Suburbia*. I thought it had a lot of integrity and it'd be a good project to start off with, so I called Penelope and she came over to the house. Being new to this and all, I took the liberty of writing a whole bunch of notes on her screenplay, adding and removing parts. About 13 pages. We sat down and I said, "I'm interested in your project, and here are some things I'd like to suggest..." For someone who'd never been in the business to do this was ridiculous, but I didn't know any better. I read it to her, and she had the wherewithal to keep in mind that I had a little money, so she just said, "That's very interesting. I'll take all that into consideration." [Laughs.]

We hit it off. I made a deal with her, and said I'd put up some money for her to make a movie if she'd help teach me the movie business. And she did. Her agent introduced me to Roger Corman, who agreed to put up the additional movie and handle distribution. I said, "Wait a minute. I want to produce it." He asked if I'd ever produced a movie before—and the answer was no—and he looked at me and said, "Well, you look like you could produce a movie, so go ahead."



DAM: Did you find any of the content jarring, or were you already familiar with the punk scene?

I didn't know too much about punk rock, as you can imagine. I mean, I was in my late 40s. So Penelope offered to introduce me to the scene. She said she'd pick me up and take me to a punk concert in Fullerton. Not knowing any better, I had a sport coat and tie on, the way I dressed for the furniture business. So she took me out to a converted skating rink. And here are all these kids going wild and jumping off the stage and looking real weird...it just blew my mind. And the way I dressed blew their mind. She says, "Bert, we've got to talk to a bunch of these kids because we're going to use real punkers in the movie." And I said, "What?" She said, "Yeah. We're not going to use actors. These are going to be actual punkers. You have to talk to these kids and tell them about coming to a try-out."

So I tried striking up conversations with some of them but they just looked at me like I was crazy. All of a sudden, I just yelled out, "Hey, you guys! This is Penelope Spheeris!" They just lined up.

She gave each of them a card, looked them all in the face, said show up at this place and we'll interview you. They all knew her from *The Decline of Western Civilization*. We met with them upstairs at some restaurant, and the people that ran the place couldn't believe it. These kids were lined up out all the way out the door, looking weird.

It was your first film and her first narrative. Did that cause any problems in getting started?

She had it all planned out despite the fact that we were operating on a real low budget. I asked her to take me around and show me how we were going to tackle every aspect of the script and production. From the film lab to the rental place to the cast, she proved every cost to me and how we were going to pull it off.

We had to find a little kid for the part of Ethan, and couldn't find anyone. I had brought in a secretary to help keep the finances straight, and she offered to bring in her nephew. We had nothing else: so she brings in this real straight kid and showed him a picture of what his character was gonna look like. The night we gave him the mohawk, he cried. The next day though, he'd gotten used to it and was really thrilled. After the shoot, his mother came up to me and said, "Bert, I don't want you to be insulted because this is really a compliment, but we've gotten a new dog and he named it Bert."

So you had no problem getting used to all of this stuff.

Well, coming in as an outsider to both the movie business and punk rock was a real education. Being on the set with these kids was always interesting. One night, we had a punk rock dance, a big punk scene. She said, "What I want you to do is stand with some of the other people here, and as the crowd sort of pushes out, push them back in towards the stage so we can keep the camera on them. Don't let them run wild and run off." That was my job for the night. And it was a madhouse. But the funny thing is that I eventually came to enjoy punk rock, which is amazing. I still can't stand rap, but I got into punk music. The more you listen to it, the more you like it.

Did the producers try to take a hand in what was going on?

Corman didn't interfere, hardly at all. He came out to the set on the first day, and gave me some advice: "Bert, no matter what happens, keep shooting. If you're shooting outside of this house and the place burns down...shoot it! Anything that happens, because we don't want to waste film." And then we never saw him again. He left it to us and we went ahead and did whatever we wanted. It stayed Penelope's vision. The only thing we argued over was the name. He wanted to call it "The Wild Side." It hadn't done very well after it opened, and he told Penelope that he didn't like the name. She said, "What are you talking about?! That's the coolest name there is!!" [Laughs.] So they had a big argument over it.

You say it didn't do well?

We'd been advised to open it in Dayton, Ohio—big mistake—and then we took it to New York and ran it in Greenwich Village, where it played for quite a while. Though it wasn't a huge moneymaker at all. It was hard to find an audience.

When it first played in Dayton, I was standing in the lobby in a suit feeling out of place. The small audience filed out and this man around my age came up to me and said, "Did you have anything to do with making this movie?" I said I'd produced it. And he said, "You should be ashamed of yourself."

I had investors on my end: my brother and friends from Cleveland. At this point, I've finished the film and I'm all excited about punk rock. I think it's great. So I took it home and arranged a screening upstairs at a Chinese restaurant, of all places. I start to show the movie, and after about ten minutes, my brother's wife took their daughter and walked out. And then a couple other people walked out. At the end of the movie, the investors were sitting there looking stunned. Dead silence. They were shocked by the movie, and I would've been too if I hadn't gone through the process. Penelope wrote the movie the way it is, and that's pretty hard for some people to take. But it was the best time of my life and I wouldn't trade it for the world. I still meet kids today who say it's their favorite movie or they've seen it ten times. Amazing. This is almost 30 years later.

So it's all good memories?

We needed a wrap party and Penelope asked where we should do it, so I arranged it at my tennis club. We had all the food catered and invited all the kids up. I wore a suit and tie but dyed my hair bright red for the evening. So all the kids came out to this high-end sports club, but they were so well behaved. The only thing was when my wife had to break up a food fight that Flea started. She said, "Now, that's enough. You just sit down and stop that." And he did.

A few weeks later, we were driving down Fairfax and I stopped to get a couple sandwiches to go at Canter's Deli. I ordered a couple sandwiches at the counter, and I noticed a kid there from the movie. He's got his back to me in his leather jacket with the chains around his neck and the spiked wrist thing, you know. Nobody's sitting around him. They've all moved away [laughs]. So I went up and slapped him real hard on the back and said, "How ya doin'?!!" He whipped around real fast and then said, "Ohhhh. Hey, Bert." The girl he was with asks him, "Who's this? Your old man?" And he stopped and said, "Yeah. For about six weeks there, he was." That was a pretty good feeling.

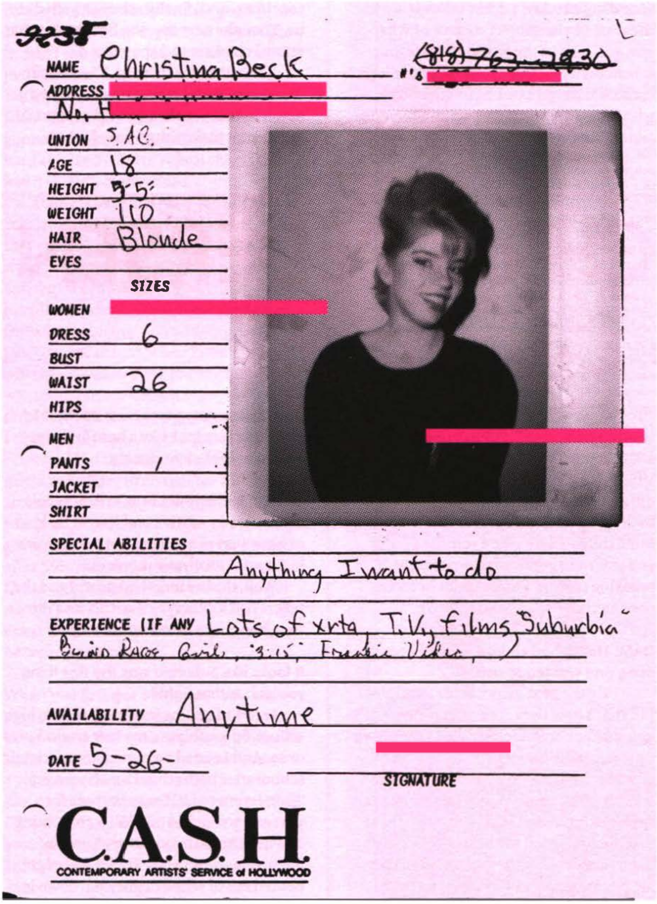
CHRISTINA BECK

"Tresa" – *SUBURBIA ('84)*

CB: I came into the film as a happy accident. At the time, my very good friend Maggie Ehrig—who plays my best friend in the movie—was cast. Penelope may have written the part specifically for her. And another friend of ours was cast as her character's best friend. But her mom read the script and didn't like it, didn't think it was appropriate. We were all underage. So at the last minute, she couldn't do the film. Maggie called me up and said, "I'm gonna do this movie, and you have to be in it with me."

It was funny because, at that time, I was really over punk rock. I felt like, "It's 1983! Punk rock is so passé." [Laughs.] I don't know what I was even getting into then. I guess it was more like the New Romantic phase, Adam and the Ants and stuff. But I'd just dyed my hair brown to avoid looking anything like a punk rocker. And then Maggie's saying that I have to dye my hair purple. I said there's no way.

Buuuut...we dyed my hair purple and showed up at the rehearsal. There were some familiar people there, and I kind of knew Penelope from around. We're reading through the script and it was the weirdest thing, because I was never officially cast. They just handed me a script and nothing was ever said about it. Later, I signed something, but for the first few days I'd just leave the set and wonder if I was even in the movie. That's how that happened. I felt like I'd just kind of snuck in there. I was worried that they'd notice me and say, "You have to leave."



~~923~~F

NAME Christina Beck

#'s ~~(818) 763-7930~~

[redacted]

ADDRESS [redacted]

UNION S.A.G.

AGE 18

HEIGHT 5'5"

WEIGHT 110

HAIR Blonde

EYES

SIZES

WOMEN [redacted]

DRESS 6

BUST

WAIST 26

HIPS

MEN

PANTS /

JACKET

SHIRT

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Anything I want to do

EXPERIENCE (IF ANY Lots of xrta, T.V., films, "Suburbia"

Burnin Rags, Girl, "3:15", Frankie Video,)

AVAILABILITY Anytime

DATE 5-26-

[redacted]

SIGNATURE

C.A.S.H.

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' SERVICE of HOLLYWOOD

DAM: I guess a lot of the other actors probably felt the same way.

All the principal actors had pretty much never acted before. We've since done a lot of acting, but back then we were making fun of actors. Right away, we just had fun and we all really did bond. There was a great camaraderie. We grew into this weird family. Looking back on it, Penelope must have been thrilled, because it just naturally happened. Really, the only professional people around were just some stunt guys that we'd make fun of. We were just having a good time and everyone was excited to be there. Honestly, we laughed from morning to night. Flea became a good friend right away, and Chris Pedersen. Maggie and I had started a band with another girl from *Suburbia* named Mary, and so it was all about music for us. We'd say, "We're in a band and this movie is just kinda fun for now. We're musicians." That was more of the focus. Our band was called Toe Jam [laughs]. We only had like two or three gigs that were very silly. Flea wrote some songs for us, which was really sweet. But we endlessly made fun of him too.

Was it exciting to be working on a project so focused on punk?

None of us considered ourselves punk rockers. If you had called us punkers or punk rockers, we'd have been like "Fuck you." What exactly we were, I have no idea. I guess we were punks, but it was just a complete insult to call us that. Everything had that dichotomy. But of

course all of us had seen *The Decline of Western Civilization*. We'd gone to the premiere on Sunset and there was the whole riot and everything, and we knew Penelope was a really great filmmaker. But at that time, it wasn't cool to be impressed by anything. Which sounds so stupid now.

Even if we were excited, we'd never let on. It was part of the attitude most of us had...nothing was shocking: nothing fazed us. And here we were with this amazing opportunity to be pulled into this world and get paid to hang out with friends and recreate the life we were pretty much already living. Plus we ended up staying friends after the movie. I hate to use the word "bond," but there it is. I'm even still friends with the sound guys today! I don't know if it was the time or the subject matter or what was going on in the world outside, but we cocooned in the world that Penelope created. I haven't talked to anybody who doesn't think it was a life-changing experience.

She must have had it tough trying to keep things together with that many non-actors. Was she patient?

Penelope really showed us a lot of respect. She didn't impose her ideas about the characters. Everyone chose who they were going to be. Obviously she had a vision for the film, and it was scripted and all, but she was incredibly smart. She didn't push things.

Well, she got mad at me and Maggie once. In the scene in the funeral home after Sheila's death, for some reason it just struck us as the funniest thing in the world. We just could not stop giggling. She kept patiently saying, "OK, you guys. You really can't laugh in this scene because your best friend just died. So let's try it again. OK...action!" This happened five or ten times, until finally...she just yelled at us. Then the next day, she bought us some animal crackers and apologized.

She had to deal with us. The benefit of working with professionally trained actors is that—well, they're professional. We did not make things easy for her.

CHRIS PEDERSEN

"Jack Diddley" – *SUBURBIA* ('84)

CP: People would ask, "Why don't you do another punk role?" I didn't need to do another punk role because I'd done one. Unless it's something that's just really different and good, why would I want to do that? And every time, it's that same thing. There'd be a role for a punk and you're either like eating garbage or breaking stuff or being violent or racist or something. It's just so skewed.

DAM: Hollywood caught wind of something and wanted to use it.

Yeah, the next disposable stereotype. But that's how they construct a movie. It's kind of like commercials, where they have a product that solves a totally arbitrary and contrived problem. Well, that's like movies. They have a plot that's completely contrived and a lead actor who they have to make look good even though the guy's like a total loser. If the guy's not tall they get people shorter than him. And then they get stereotypes to raise up the lead and make him look like a hero and everybody else looks like clowns.

There'd be beatniks or bikers or hippie characters in movies and they'd be kind of based on something, but punks were just post-apocalyptic maniacs.

Well, the beatniks had poetry and the bikers had motorcycles so there's a direction, but punks were just wide open.

It looks like *Suburbia* was the first thing you did. Is that right?

I started getting into punk rock in high school. I probably cut my hair around 1979 or so. And I ended up in airplane mechanic school after high school for about a year. Then I went to UC Santa Barbara for a year and got kicked out. We were coming down to the Starwood every Tuesday night, or as often as we could. After I got booted out of school, I got a job down in

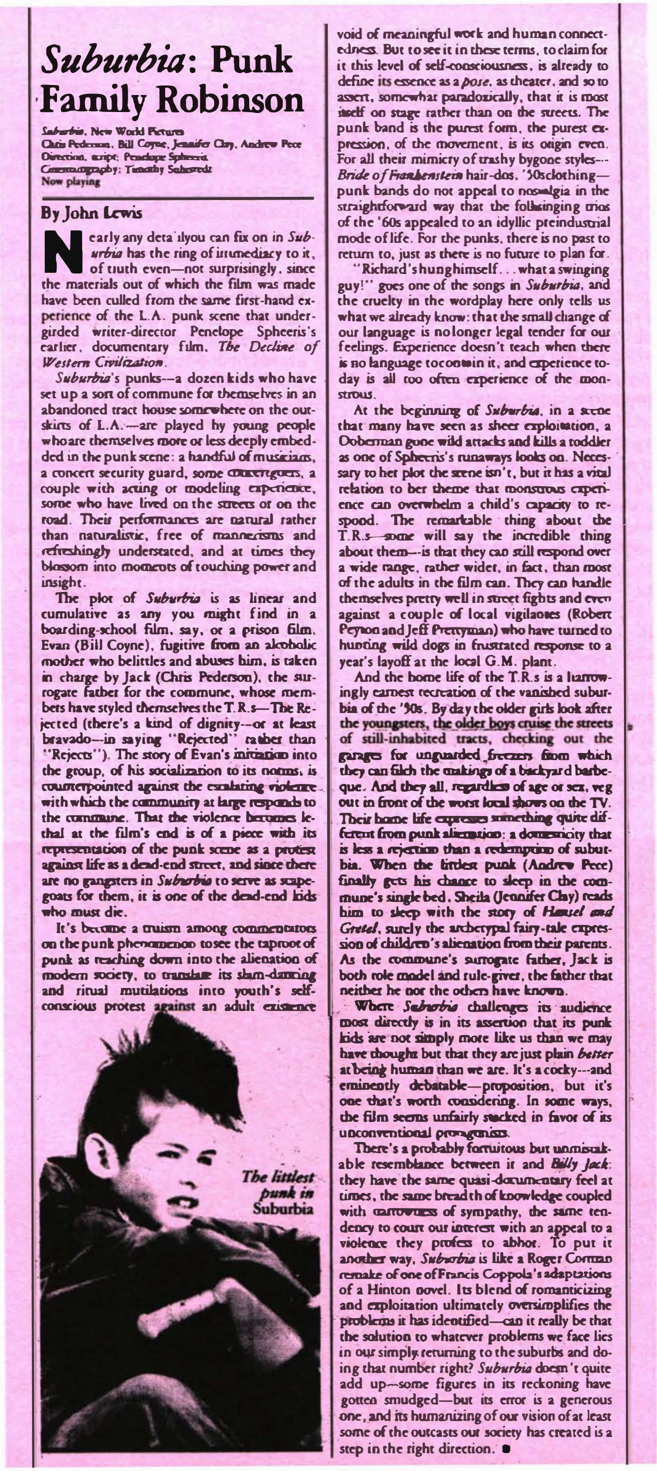
Burbank at an aerospace company as a technical writer and I got laid off from that. Then a couple months after that, I was waiting for TSOL to play a free concert at a park in Long Beach. That was probably late 1981...Penelope approached me about being in her film. I didn't know her. She just came up to me and said, "Hey, I'm making a movie." And having grown up in Los Angeles I'm like, "Yeah, so what. You and everybody else." I might have actually said that to her because I was pretty mouthy.

So, I'm blowing her off until she says it's gonna be a hundred dollars a day. I'd just gotten laid off and at the time that was like WOO! A hundred bucks a day is a lot of money, so I said I'd do it. And she said, "No, it's really good," and I said, "I don't care, a hundred bucks sounds good to me. I'll be there." I had to read for it and I got it. And I was a technical writer: I'd only just surfed and done mechanical things. But I was on like every page of the script and I realized if I screw this up, I'm really gonna look like a fool. I worked pretty hard at it, and tried to repeat things until I had it vaguely memorized.

Acting isn't really hard; it's not rocket science. I think that people just overthink that stuff. As we were doing the film—I wasn't allowed to see any of the dailies and that was probably a good thing—but people would say, "Hey, I saw the dailies from last night and you're doing a good job." I heard that a lot and I don't know whether they were just puffing me up or whatever: but I felt like it wasn't going terribly, so I'll just keep going with this. I didn't really have anything else going on, it was just this movie, so I figured I might as well try to do that for a living since it wasn't really hard and the money was good. It took me a while, but I finally got an agent. I had to go get my SAG card after *Suburbia*, and I guess I did *Night of the Comet* right after and that was just to get my SAG card. That's a good one for punkers; it was sci-fi so it was OK for punks to be weird and crazy.

When you first got on the set, you were probably a little bit nervous or hesitant. What was it like to be shooting the movie since everyone was in the same boat?

I was nervous, but I'd call it more like anxious...I was probably just terrified. I knew Flea and a lot of people I'd seen around, but there was a lot of the cast I didn't really know. A lot of the people were from down in Orange County.



Suburbia: Punk Family Robinson

Suburbia, New World Pictures
Chris Pederson, Bill Coyne, Jennifer Clay, Andrew Pece
Direction, script: Penelope Spheeris
Cinematography: Timothy Suhrstedt
Now playing

By John Lewis

Nearly any detail you can fix on in *Suburbia* has the ring of immediacy to it, of truth even—not surprisingly, since the materials out of which the film was made have been culled from the same first-hand experience of the L.A. punk scene that undergirded writer-director Penelope Spheeris's earlier, documentary film, *The Decline of Western Civilization*.

Suburbia's punks—a dozen kids who have set up a sort of commune for themselves in an abandoned tract house somewhere on the outskirts of L.A.—are played by young people who are themselves more or less deeply embedded in the punk scene: a handful of musicians, a concert security guard, some concertgoers, a couple with acting or modeling experience, some who have lived on the streets or on the road. Their performances are natural rather than naturalistic, free of mannerisms and refreshingly understated, and at times they blossom into moments of touching power and insight.

The plot of *Suburbia* is as linear and cumulative as any you might find in a boarding-school film, say, or a prison film. Evan (Bill Coyne), fugitive from an alcoholic mother who belittles and abuses him, is taken in charge by Jack (Chris Pederson), the surrogate father for the commune, whose members have styled themselves the T.R.s—The Rejected (there's a kind of dignity—or at least bravado—in saying "Rejected" rather than "Rejects"). The story of Evan's initiation into the group, of his socialization to its norms, is counterpointed against the escalating violence with which the community at large responds to the commune. That the violence becomes lethal at the film's end is of a piece with its representation of the punk scene as a protest against life as a dead-end street, and since there are no gangsters in *Suburbia* to serve as scapegoats for them, it is one of the dead-end kids who must die.

It's become a truism among commentators on the punk phenomenon to see the taproot of punk as reaching down into the alienation of modern society, to translate its slam-dancing and ritual mutilations into youth's self-conscious protest against an adult existence void of meaningful work and human connectedness. But to see it in these terms, to claim for it this level of self-consciousness, is already to define its essence as a *pose*, as theater, and so to assert, somewhat paradoxically, that it is most itself on stage rather than on the streets. The punk band is the purest form, the purest expression, of the movement, is its origin even. For all their mimicry of trashy bygone styles—*Bride of Frankenstein* hair-dos, '50s clothing—punk bands do not appeal to nostalgia in the straightforward way that the folksinging trios of the '60s appealed to an idyllic preindustrial mode of life. For the punks, there is no past to return to, just as there is no future to plan for.

"Richard's hung himself...what a swinging guy!" goes one of the songs in *Suburbia*, and the cruelty in the wordplay here only tells us what we already know: that the small change of our language is no longer legal tender for our feelings. Experience doesn't teach when there is no language to contain it, and experience today is all too often experience of the monstrous.

At the beginning of *Suburbia*, in a scene that many have seen as sheer exploitation, a Doberman gone wild attacks and kills a toddler as one of Spheeris's runaways looks on. Necessary to her plot the scene isn't, but it has a vital relation to her theme that monstrous experience can overwhelm a child's capacity to respond. The remarkable thing about the T.R.s—some will say the incredible thing about them—is that they can still respond over a wide range, rather wider, in fact, than most of the adults in the film can. They can handle themselves pretty well in street fights and even against a couple of local vigilantes (Robert Peyton and Jeff Prettyman) who have turned to hunting wild dogs in frustrated response to a year's layoff at the local G.M. plant.

And the home life of the T.R.s is a harrowingly earnest recreation of the vanished suburbia of the '50s. By day the older girls look after the youngsters, the older boys cruise the streets of still-inhabited tracts, checking out the garages for unguarded freezers from which they can filch the makings of a backyard barbeque. And they all, regardless of age or sex, veg out in front of the worst local shows on the TV. Their home life expresses something quite different from punk alienation: a domesticity that is less a rejection than a redemption of suburbia. When the littlest punk (Andrew Pece) finally gets his chance to sleep in the commune's single bed, Sheila (Jennifer Clay) reads him to sleep with the story of *Hansel and Gretel*, surely the archetypal fairy-tale expression of children's alienation from their parents. As the commune's surrogate father, Jack is both role model and rule-giver, the father that neither he nor the others have known.

Where *Suburbia* challenges its audience most directly is in its assertion that its punk kids are not simply more like us than we may have thought but that they are just plain *better* at being human than we are. It's a cocky—and eminently debatable—proposition, but it's one that's worth considering. In some ways, the film seems unfairly stacked in favor of its unconventional protagonists.

There's a probably fortuitous but unmistakable resemblance between it and *Billy Jack*: they have the same quasi-documentary feel at times, the same breadth of knowledge coupled with narrowness of sympathy, the same tendency to court our interest with an appeal to a violence they profess to abhor. To put it another way, *Suburbia* is like a Roger Corman remake of one of Francis Coppola's adaptations of a Hinton novel. Its blend of romanticizing and exploitation ultimately oversimplifies the problems it has identified—can it really be that the solution to whatever problems we face lies in our simply returning to the suburbs and doing that number right? *Suburbia* doesn't quite add up—some figures in its reckoning have gotten smudged—but its error is a generous one, and its humanizing of our vision of at least some of the outcasts our society has created is a step in the right direction. ■

The littlest punk in Suburbia

It took a little while for everyone to get together, but everyone was cool and there weren't problems with anything. And after we were done, we'd all go out to whatever was going on that night.

What did you think about the movie?

I just saw it at a Penelope Spheeris tribute after having not seen it for maybe 15 years. I think it's definitely made up of parts that are relevant and also made up of other parts that were true stories. For sure. I know some of the stories she put in there. There's nothing in there that's total fiction, but it is strung together and compressed into a movie format. So, I don't know...I guess when I first read the script I just thought it was a movie. I knew that most of the stories were true, but I was so immersed in all that stuff, and it just seemed to be cut from the same cloth of what I was dealing with every day. It didn't seem false to me; it didn't seem true. I just kinda took it all as a story that was plausible. I didn't think it was ridiculous.

Had you seen *Decline of Western Civilization* before?

I did. I liked *Decline*. That was really good. That was really the first time that anything like that got honestly portrayed. We would go out and just have these total adventures and get chased by the cops and there'd be these parking lot brawls. People would pull guns on us and stuff like that. That was just the way it was...it was us against the world.

So you ended up playing another kind of punk character in *Night of the Comet* and again in *Point Break*, right? When was it that you decided not to pursue acting anymore?

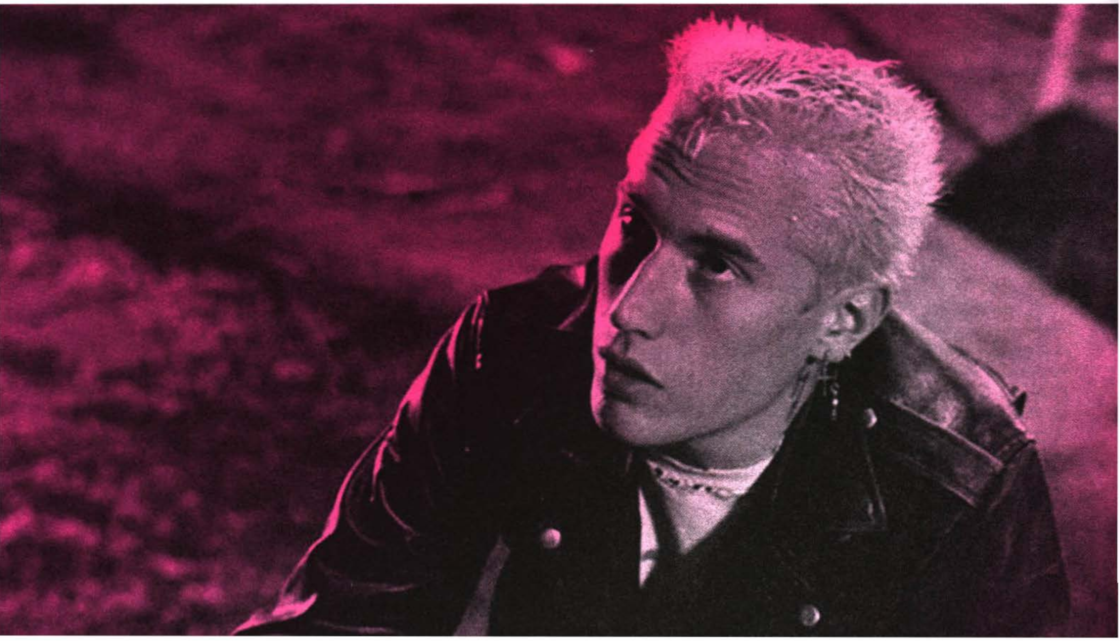
I think *Point Break* was one thing; it was just a nasty job. Nothing against anybody who was on it...they were just film people and they just do what they do. That was the longest—I was on that thing for like nine months on and off—and in that process I basically got fired for no reason, they had to rehire me because I had a guarantee and they tried to intimidate my agent out of pursuing it. It just got nasty as a job. Most of the time I'd been working on projects with really cool people. Not to generalize, but there's a lot of really ambitious people in Hollywood, and I think everybody goes through that thing in one form or another, trying to climb up the money tree and get to the top before the next guy.

I'd be reading for these totally gratuitous, violent roles; like I'd be a rapist or something, and that's what was available to a character actor. Just totally vacant. Perpetuating the kind of stereotypes that make people afraid. And it's like, how many onscreen gratuitous rapes do you need to be a part of? I mean, none, right? Before you realize your part in this is just perpetuating all the stuff you hate. And the truth is, you've gotta swim through X number of garbage roles like that before you get the good ones, and then even after you get the good ones, you've gotta swim through X number of garbage roles like that before you get to the next good one and that's just the way it goes.

Economically, being an actor is tough. I think on *Point Break* I think I made $40,000 in nine months, which was a huge amount of money to me at the time, but even so, it seemed to work out that I only worked once every year or year and a half, so in a year when the film finally comes out, by the time I'm going to the premiere of the film, I'd be broke.

I really love doing the work. There's this whole thing where you're acting out a fantasy of someone else's life and getting to walk in their shoes and think about things the way they think about them and get paid for it. And that's a pretty neat thing to do for a couple of months out of a year, so I loved doing that and I love films. But it's kind of a wasted medium, if you think about it. There are a few people in it that are doing good, but they need to make compromises to get their films made.

I just think about these rock'n' rollers like The Rolling Stones. And, it's cool, they've got a way of making money and they're sticking to it, but why not just let it go once you've left something good for people to look at? You know? Leave it at that.



ANDREW PECE

"Ethan" – *SUBURBIA ('84)*

DAM: How did you become the world's first pre-adolescent movie punk?

AP: I was 7 when they were shooting. My mom was a second assistant director, but my being cast was actually my aunt's doing. She was involved in the accounting for the movie or something. There was some story where they had a child actor already, but he supposedly flipped out at the last minute about the mohawk, so they were just asking employees if they knew anyone that could do it. So when they got to my aunt, she brought me in. I don't know if they liked me or they were just desperate, to be honest [laughs]. I was just a regular kid, not a child actor. It was the luck of the draw.

I've heard that you weren't into the haircut either.

[Laughs.] I was upset about the mohawk, but I swear it's because everyone else upset me! I wasn't thinking it was a big deal, but then everyone around me kept asking, "Are you going to be OK? Are you sure?," and it made me start to think that it was going to be a big deal. Especially my mom, she was the worst. "It's going to be fine, baby. It'll be fine." So I ended up thinking, "Oh God, what is this? Is a mohawk something really bad?" I was an adventurous kid and a haircut wouldn't have bothered me, but everyone got me all worked up.

Being so young, did you have any idea of what punk was before you were thrown into it on set?

This was pretty much my first real exposure to punk. Like everyone, I'd sometimes see a guy with pink hair or whatever, but I had no concept of what it was. So it was cool, because everything was suddenly so up close and I was right in the middle of it with all of these "real punks." I had a really good experience on set. I have a lot of memories of them shooting the concert segments, the people: the music. I never was a punk, but that music brings back good memories. There were people I was closer with, like Tim O'Brien who played Skinner. I'd heard he might have ended up in jail or something, but I hope not. When I was a kid, years after the movie, he was just driving his car and saw me out of the blue while I was walking home. He just recognized me as the kid he'd been in the movie with, so he picked me up and took me to my house. There were a couple girls in the car, and if my mom had seen me getting a ride home from a skinhead with two girls, she would've been a little surprised. Flea was nice to me, and seemed to be genuinely good with kids too. The other guys were pretty rough on me...I mean, these were 17-year-olds. I haven't been in contact with anyone since then.

What did you think of the film when you watched it for the first time?

When I first saw *Suburbia* as a kid, I wasn't that crazy about it. My friends and I in fifth grade would rip on it, pointing out the lower-budget aspects. But as I got older, I realized that it's really pretty amazing. Penelope did something unique, and I've gotten to appreciate it a lot more and I feel really lucky to have been a part of it. And it was pretty popular with many groups of people, so I got recognized for years. Even when I was getting into high school, it was still happening.

SUBURBIA

Dir. Richard Linklater / 1996

Young adults whine outside a convenience store.

"I can't believe we're sitting here in this mosh pit of consumerism," says Giovanni Ribisi as he and his girlfriend relax in a Whataburger. If you think this is good dialogue, then you'll love this film. If you have any common sense, you will hate and avoid this trash. Here is a movie about how hard it is to be young in the late '90s, starring actors in their late 20s, directed by a man in his late 30s and written by a man in his late 40s. The movie basically portrays young people as a bunch of one-dimensional dummies who thrive on mistakes; an afterschool special disguised as a hip indie film. Linklater shows off his directing "style" of pointing a camera at something and filming it. The normally entertaining Steve Zahn isn't normal or entertaining as a green-haired fuck-up with a Twinkie T-shirt. His character takes video documentation of a cloud while on mushrooms. Eric Bogosian wrote the screenplay as well as the stage version this was adapted from, proving in two mediums that he has drifted immeasurably far from his subculture roots. The soundtrack by Sonic Youth is the ONLY good thing here, but is obscured by crud like a shiny new quarter dropped in a public toilet. (BC)

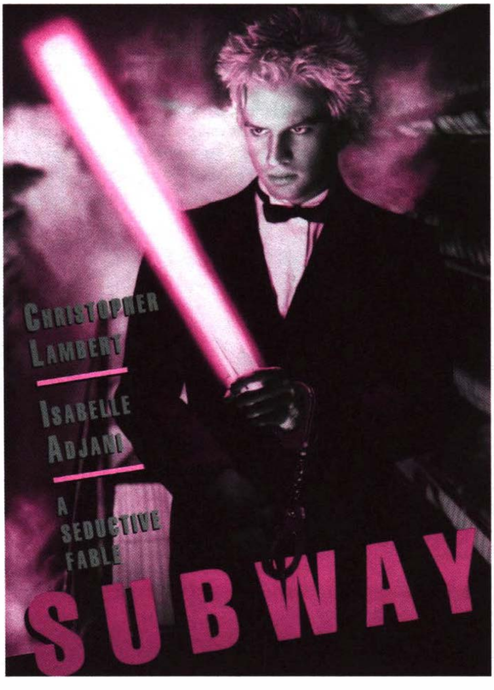
SUBWAY

Dir. Luc Besson / 1985

Well-dressed French vagrants wander below the streets.

Subway has the brutal distinction of being ponderous filmmaker Besson's most meandering work. Homeless bohemians play abrasive music and steal purses in the corners of a vast Parisian subway complex. Christopher Lambert is Fred, a bleached, tuxedo-clad con man who hides out with the subterranean misfits and awaits visits from emotionally tortured love interest Héléna (Isabelle Adjani).

Typically aimless garbage that reinforces the negative stereotype of French film. I thought I'd made it through to the end without having to review it, but a tri-hawked female leatherpunk rears her head in the final scene while a safari-camouflaged white funk band toodles dubious jams with Jean Reno on drums. I'd appreciate it if the aforementioned new wave lady would please send me her home address so I can mail her a bomb as thanks for making me write about this cinematic bowel-grinder. (ZC)



SUCCESS IS THE BEST REVENGE

Dir. Jerzy Skolimowski / 1984

People in another country talk and do things
at the speed of a snail on Quaaludes.

The best revenge would be to make someone watch this Polish napmaker. Even in fast-forward, you would swear this is in slow motion. Lots of scenes of sitting and talking. Sometimes the director likes to mix things up with scenes of standing and talking. It's not interesting to look at, listen to or experience in any way. Would anyone ever own this movie? Who, including Skolimowski's mom, could watch this more than once? "Oh hey, they're showing a revival of *Success is the Best Revenge* at the theater. You have to see it on the big screen." No. This would never happen. John Hurt is allowed to do squat. A kid runs away and gets spiky red hair, but he looks in a mirror with David Bowie's face taped to it, which obviously ruins the moment. This is the type of film you'd be made to watch in college for no reason. (BC)

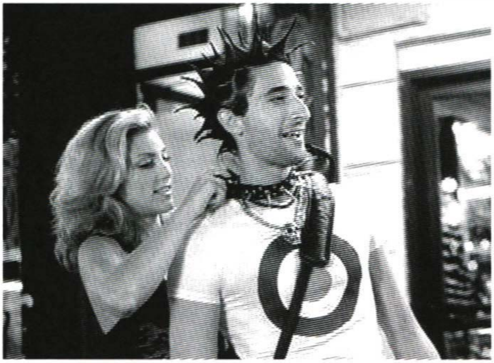
SUMMER CAMP NIGHTMARE

Dir. Bert L. Dragin / 1987

Hooligans take control of a youth camp.

Camp North Pines. Iron-jawed Chuck "*The Rifleman*" Connors is head counselor Mr. Warren, an old-school patriarch whose interests include butterfly collecting and Jesus. Grumpy young Stanley Runk (Stuart Rogers) is a counselor-in-training who prefers to go by "Runk the Punk." His fashion aesthetic gives no credence to his nickname, as this oily, longhaired bully looks more New Jersey Guido than counterculture warrior, and his main targets are the dweebish adolescent misfits of the camp like Duck (Adam Carl). Duck re-wires the rec room TV to show softcore porn instead of religious programming. At the co-ed talent show, Runk and company don eyeliner and perform a blasting lip synch rendition of Fear's sexually explicit anthem "Beef Baloney," much to the dismay of Mr. Warren, who pulls the plug on the show and is called a "gonad" by the campers. When Warren's conservative commandeering becomes unbearable, the youth counselors band together in mutiny. The revolution succeeds, the adults are overthrown and things quickly roll completely out of control in an uneven mix of humor and drama that ends up closer to Orwell's *Animal Farm* than *Lord of the Flies*.

Bert Dragin had produced the flawless youth-in-revolt epic *Suburbia* for Penelope Spheeris, who co-wrote his directorial debut in turn. Note: the film's poster/VHS cover tagline reads: "Dear Mom, The camp director is dead. The counselors are locked up. And the kids are out of control. Having a wonderful time. Love, Marvin." There is no character in this movie named Marvin. (ZC)



SUMMER OF SAM

Dir. Spike Lee / 1999

Richie's (Adrien Brody) new spiked hair and punk attitude is so freaky, he's suspected by his neighbors of being the Son of Sam killer.

Aside from the horribly overacted performance of John (*The Pest*) Leguizamo as Vinny, Spike Lee's *Summer of Sam* is an interesting peek at a block on New York's South Bronx circa 1977. The serial killer plot stands as a side note to the goings-on of the neighborhood; a microcosm of the decadence of drugs, sexuality and violence coming into bloom throughout New York City during that period. Lee also makes a noble attempt at trying to elevate discrimination beyond his usual focus on race and dwell on the insecurities the neighbors have with Richie's appearance.

After Richie arrives for the summer wearing a Union Jack T-shirt, zippered pants, skull necklace and spiky hair, Vinny must come to terms with his friend being a punk. To sell it even further, Richie talks in a faux-cockney accent, which he justifies to his friend as being part of the "punk attitude." The recent scene inductee also joins a band called The Late Term Abortions, who go on to play their first show at the legendary CBGB. The onscreen band contains members of the N.Y. punk group Furious George, who also wrote music for the film. Who would've thought CBGB would be immortalized like this? (*AT*)

SUNDOWN: THE VAMPIRE IN RETREAT

Dir. Anthony Hickox / 1990

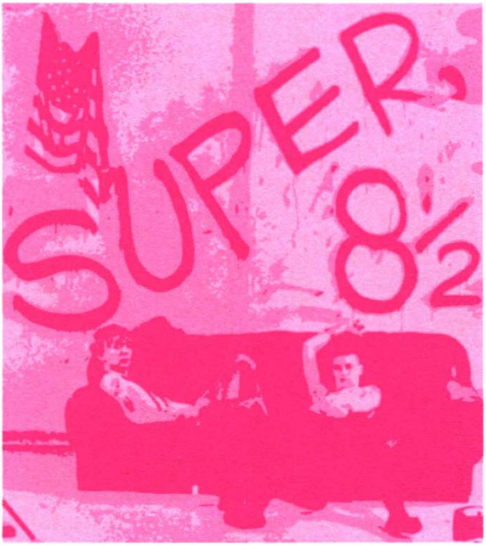
A vampire hunter lands in the middle of a full-scale war between the forces of the undead.

An action/horror/Western/family comedy from the director of the *Waxwork* films. Jim Metzler plays Dave Harrison, a human unwittingly hired to mass-produce artificial blood for a desert town of vampires. Their leader is the theatrical Count Josek Mardulak (David Carradine), an Old World bloodsucker now bent on peaceful coexistence with mortals. The locals are willing to adhere to his rules, with the exceptions of residents Shane (Maxwell Caulfield) and Sheriff Jefferson (classic Hollywood veteran John Ireland), who've secretly amassed an army of human-hungry vampires ready to turn the tide. Among them are two teens kidnapped from an inexplicably remote desert punk club. This duo seems pleased as punch to have been transformed into creatures of the night, though they've clung to counterculture accoutrements like leather bracelets and skunk-striped bouffants. Added to the mix is a young beanpole Bruce Campbell as a Van Helsing descendant who accidentally becomes romantically involved with a beautiful vampire waitress (*Valley Girl*'s Deborah Foreman). Campbell is at his goofhallin' maximum, googling his eyes and squinching up his moustache like a true nut. M. Emmet Walsh, George "Buck" Flower and *TerrorVision*'s Bert Remsen put in typically tip-top performances as a gaggle of creaky, crotchety bloodsuckers. With so many eminent character actors vying for sections of the ever-expanding plot, the movie's a goddamn mess... but so pure of heart and intent on entertaining that you can't help but overlook its faults. Or maybe you're just charmed by the claymation bat with the little white beard. (*ZC*)

SUPER 8½

Dir. Bruce LaBruce / 1995

A fading prima donna porn star looks back in horror at his career.



Famed anti-budget gay cinema guerrilla LaBruce plays Bruce (!), an aloof porn star surrounded by destructive personalities like vicious female street tough Googie and punk hustler Johnny Eczema. The latter is a twitchy hardcore waif (in an ever-present Butthole Surfers "Brown Reason to Live" tank top) who's involved in two fistfights before the opening credits have ended. Bruce's boyfriend Pierce is a similarly rugged streetpunk in leather and tiny denim cutoffs. Bruce is interviewed throughout, and footage from his (and his character's) earlier work is shown, much of it hardcore. One scene from "*Ride Queer Ride*" has him lying in the road until a concerned dreadlocked punk motorist pulls over to make sure he's all right. Then the two of them trade BJs. Footage like this becomes more explicit as Bruce's descent into self-loathing and artistic obscurity continues. Kids in the Hall's Scott Thompson produced and makes an appearance, as does legendary punk filmmaker Richard Kern and Screeching Weasel frontman Ben Weasel. (*ZC*)

SUPERMAN IV: THE QUEST FOR PEACE

Dir. Sidney J. Furie / 1987

Superman searches for more money.

It wasn't kryptonite that killed Superman; it was this dopey film. A movie so crappy that even as an 8-year-old I could see its limitations, realizing that I was just another schmuck betrayed by the adult world. Every nook and cranny of *Superman IV* oozes with Hollywood laziness, and all the actors look anxious to go home. Experience the true humiliation of Clark Kent as he's forced into the '80s aerobics craze! The übervillain created from nuclear bombs, the sun and Superman's hair is played by an actor slightly more talented than a catalog model. Jon Cryer appears as the evil hipster nephew of Lex Luthor. I picture a boardroom of studio execs creating this character by desperately piecing together things they heard or assumed were popular with young kids. He talks with an exaggerated SoCal accent and the top of his hair is dyed orange and molded into some sort of somethin'-or-other. Check out his clothes, aren't they "wild." A thankless role for Cryer in his second of four onscreen punk performances, forced to portray an evil third-rung Duckie in a movie made to sell pajamas. (BC)

SURF NAZIS MUST DIE

Dir. Peter George / 1987

The Fourth Reich invades the California sands.

After an earthquake transforms LA into a wasteland, Adolf and Eva rule the shores, educating pre-adolescent waveriders on surfing purity ("Goofyfooters are an inferior breed!"). These children are a mass of spiked hair and rosy, swastika-painted cheeks. The other Surf Nazis—steel-handed Hook, scavenging weasel Mengele, etc.—spend their days shooting the curl and their nights plotting supreme beachfront domination. Bleach-buzzed disciple Smeg is kept under the manicured thumb of his suburban mom, played by '80s direct-to-video royalty Bobbie Bresee (*Mausoleum; Evil Spawn*). When one of the more punk-inspired Nazi youths steals a purse from a tanning old woman, do-gooder Leroy Washington steps in. Adolf tells him, "You look like a white man I once knew...if he fell down a chimney." Soon, Leroy's elderly mother is identifying her son's remains at the coroner's office.

As the Nazis gain confidence in their violent rampage, the sands become a warzone, wiped clean of tourists and other gangs. Mengele even kills a hippie by chewing a hole in his throat. Eventually, all enemies have been destroyed. That is, until Leroy's mama stages a fearless assault on the Surf Nazis, leading them on a bullet-ridden, decapitation-punctuated chase through the final coastal outposts of Hitler's dream.

Movies like this rarely live up to the promise of their title (especially when released by Troma), but *Surf Nazis Must Die* seems to surprise even itself with several inspired moments, standout performances and an incredible electronic score. The character design and set dressing creates a unique aesthetic among '80s post-apocalyptic cheapies, like the graffiti near the Nazi's bunker that reads: "GIVE A HOT BEEF INJECTION TO A LIFELESS CORPSE."

Director Peter George states the Surf Nazis became genuinely hostile during shooting, and many of the fights onscreen are actual combat. George himself plays a hijacked speedboat pilot, and crashed his nephew's borrowed vessel while completing the climactic battle segment. The character of Mengele was played by pugnacious actor Michael Sonye, who'd later assume the stage name "Dukey Flyswatter" as the frontman for ghoulrock band Haunted Garage. (ZC)

SURF II

Dir. Randall Badat / 1984

This greatest-mohawked-zombie-comedy ever made is best summarized on the back of its VHS box: "Menlo Schwartzer—the geekiest mad scientist of all—wants to rid the world of surfers by transforming them into garbage-ingesting zombie punks! But no way dude can he stop their most awesome party!"

Surf II (no, there was not a *Surf I*) packs more early '80s drive-in mania into one movie than even a rabid animal brain can handle. Drooling undead new wave boneheads, valley girls, electronically transgendered geekazoids in underwater fortresses, spazztastic video game combat and even transvestite-chasing fatties!

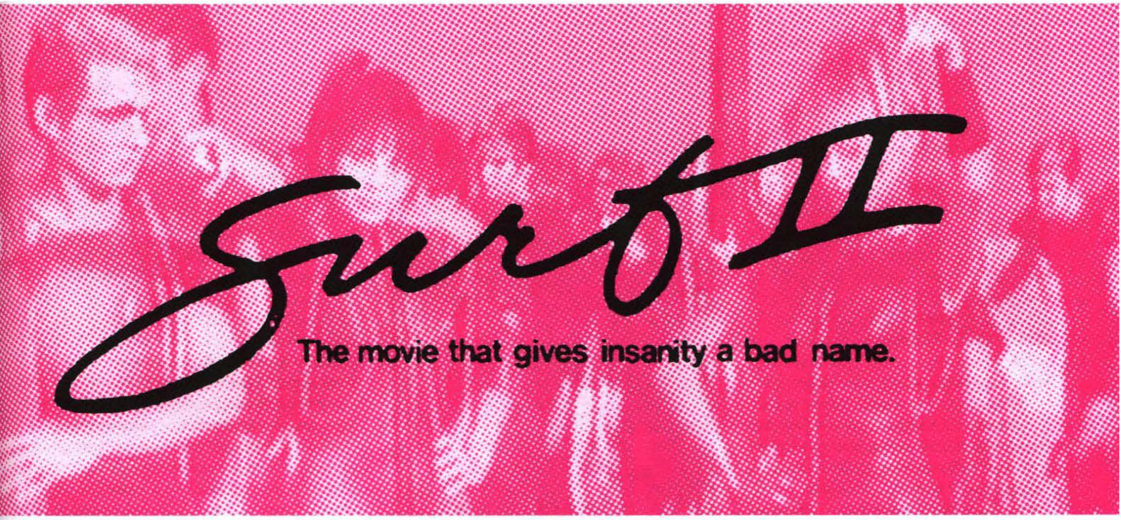
More importantly, this picture sports a career-best lead performance from supreme alpha nerd Eddie Deezen. Of the countless iconic geek roles nailed by Deezen from the '70s on, this was his first spot in the lead and absolutely his crowning achievement as a performer. As the surfercidal mastermind Menlo, he's allowed the rare opportunity to exhibit a variety of emotions: hatred, heartbreak, jealousy and wrath, each executed in his trademarked pencil-neck style. Reluctantly aiding Menlo in his diabolical quest is sweet-tempered new waver Sparkle (Australian beauty Linda Kerridge), a Debbie Harry-inspired creation of the mad scientist who was once the nerdiest girl in school, Florinda Budnick. Menlo flaunts her like a new tie, dragging her along to social outings to inspire awe and jealousy, sometimes glitzing her up with hair dye and futuristic makeup.

The other members of the cast are no slouches, with especially powerful comic work from Lyle Waggoner as Chief Boyardie and *Blazing Saddles*' Cleavon Little. Also on hand are Ron "Horshack" Palillo, Ruth Buzzi and party comedy superstar Corinne Bohrer. It's not just the performances, but the perfectly captured stereotypes that elevate *Surf II*: token slob Johnny Bighead eats everything in sight, capping off his monosyllabic zingers with "Uh-bow-bow w!"; the surfers (including Eric Stoltz) care about nothing but hanging out and getting tubed; and then there's the film's most stunning accomplishment...its PUNKS.

Every kid who takes so much as a sip of Buzzz Cola is transformed into a blazingly primal manbeast with multi-colored hair, face paint and a post-apocalyptic wetsuit. They shamble in groups, devouring broken glass and motor oil, emitting primal grunts and bashing their skulls through walls. Transformed wave-rager Jacko (the late Tom

Villard) triumphs in an eating contest against the massive Bighead, where the two take turns scarfing on rotting fish, seaweed and all other refuse within reach. When another Buzzz punk is hit by a car, science teacher Mr. Beaker performs an autopsy, pulling unchewed manta rays, ship wreckage and Jimmy Hoffa evidence from the kid's stomach cavity. Once he's stitched up, the zombified teen grabs a bottle of Buzzz and starts chugging, the petroleum-based beverage squirting out of the incision.

Surf II is pure fun in the form of a movie, born at a short-lived moment in history where culture was low and damaged enough to sustain a comedy of this magnitude. No joke is too easy or bizarre, but the film manages to excel with countless deeply creative moments, most notably the unbelievable split-duplex scene where two families carry on identical conversations for minutes. If a film were released today with a fraction of the no-rules banana-peel insanity of this masterpiece, it'd boil the shriveled brain of the weak modern moviegoer. There will never be another film that captures the irresponsible, junk food-fueled spirit of the partiest decade our species will ever see. Combined with the pogo-inducing soundtrack by Oingo Boingo and the Circle Jerks, this is flat-out the most entertaining IQ-remover The Video Age ever shat out! *Totally retardular*!!! (ZC)


Surf II
The movie that gives insanity a bad name.

RANDALL BADAT

Director – *SURF II*

RB: I was living in LA, in Venice, just starting out as a writer. And I used to surf down there, while the punk scene was in full gear at Blackie's in Ocean Park. I'd run into these guys out in the water, and they'd talk about the crazy shit they did at parties. That's where I first heard talk of some guy named either Johnny Bighead or just Bighead, but he jumped into a fire and started eating burning logs.

Most of these guys had mohawks or shaved heads, and it was a cross between the punk and skinhead look. They were pretty funny and pretty harmless, for the most part. At the same time, the water coming out of the Pico drain was found to be extremely contaminated, and there was a cancer cluster. Several lifeguards that worked on that part of the beach had come down with leukemia and other horrible things. All the water that was running through the gutters of LA was draining—essentially untreated—into the Santa Monica bay. There were many days when I'd be sitting in the water out there and there'd be streams of bright yellow and green and unidentifiable floating stuff on top of the water. There were famous surf breaks out by El Segundo...one was called "Shit Pipe" for obvious reasons. So the combination of this sick environment and these punk kids and surfing sort of laid the groundwork for *Surf II* in my mind.

So one day, I'd gone out surfing, the board bounced off the bottom and the end of it went through the side of my cheek.

I needed about 15 stitches in the side of my face, and it almost knocked me out. I got out of the water and asked my friend, "Does it look really bad?" He said, "Well, I don't want to alarm you, but I can see your tongue through your cheek." [Laughs.] I went straight to the doctor, who stitched me up, shot me up with Novocaine and gave me some really heavy painkillers. But I had to go to this Warner Bros. industry party that night: so needless to say, I drank to subdue the pain.

I was doing my best to make idle conversation with some other writer friends, and I brought up the idea of kind of doing this "Frankie & Annette Go to Hell" kind of movie. Up to that point, there'd been nothing like that. There'd been the old beach party movies and there was nostalgia for those, but the idea here would include surf punks and polluted water and dimwit kids. The old Frankie and Annette icons are now parents while the kids have inherited the beach. I'm rattling this off to my friends, completely out of my mind, and they say that it's a great idea and I should write this thing. I basically had to stay home the entire weekend anyway since my injury blew up like a softball on the side of my face, and I just stayed stoned and wrote *Surf II* in two days.

I brought it to my agent. I was a pocket client at the CAA at that time and I was in the middle of my first major studio deal writing a family drama for Warner Bros. He read *Surf II* and said, "This is the worst piece of shit that I've ever seen. Don't ever bring this here again. Don't show this to anybody. Don't talk about it. You have a budding career and you're gonna show people this piece of shit??" [Laughs.] So he wasn't any help, but I showed it to a few friends, and in a very short span of time there was a lot of activity on the script. Producer George Braunstein stepped in and was able to get some money together, and we were out shooting in a matter of months. It was pretty quick.

DAM: You'd been a writer, but now you were shooting the picture?

I didn't know what the hell I was doing as a director, quite frankly. I was working part time as a projectionist down at Market Street and I was writing other things, but this was a big deal. Independent film was sort of at its height, Roger Corman had his operation right there in our backyard and they must have been cranking out 20 films a year. It was easy to get distribution for an independent film then, and George and his partner Ron Hamady's stock-in-trade was finding a property they liked, putting the finances together and offering the writer a chance to direct. Basically you got a free option and didn't have to pay a real director, and if you surround them with people that at least kind of know what they're doing, they're likely to do a reasonable job.

So how did everything start off?

When we started shooting, there'd been a 14-foot shark sighted the day before. We talked to the lifeguards and they said there was no problem. So we put everyone in the water, and the next day they caught this monster shark. Whoops. Then there were high tides that brought waves crashing into our lights and cables, exploding generators and almost electrocuting us.

Jesus. What can you tell me about the actors...especially the punks?

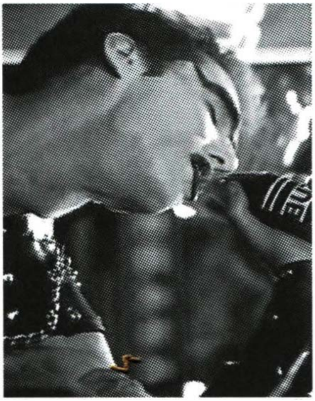
The Buzzz punks were always visualized as zombies in shredded wetsuits. *Surf II*'s deal was that it was a comedy and was a spoof, but it really was supposed to be this beach party/B-horror film hybrid. When I originally wrote it, it was still goofy but definitely darker and more sinister. It was an '80s punk version of something like *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein*. If you look at Russ Meyer films without the boobs—I'll explain about the boobs later—it's kind of a similar terrain.

The set designer and the costume designers and I all got together and basically decided to get some old wetsuits, rip 'em up and make these guys look like monsters with a sort of punk flair. It was great, and the look created itself. It really wasn't a stretch, because the guys on the streets and in the punk clubs had the same spikes and multi-colored hair and studs in their faces...all the stuff that's around today. But it was so outrageous back then, and we just exaggerated it. Most of the punks were actors rather than the real deal, like Tom Villard. We needed people that we could actually depend on to show up for work [laughs].

But they're all just "punk" as a result of drinking toxic soda...

One of my secret dreams when making *Surf II* was that I was going to make my fortune selling Buzzz Cola. It pre-dated Jolt. I don't know if they took their lead

from us, but Buzzz was the prototype for energy drinks and Jolt Cola. The idea was just this super high-potency soft drink. I'm not kidding, I wanted to get a bottling deal for Buzzz. There's the guy that drinks a bottle of Buzzz Cola at the beach party and then does that crazy dance. When we auditioned him, he said, "Let me show you my routine," and threw himself on the ground and had this freak-out that was unbelievable. But what none of us realized was how hard it would be to do this on the sand. When you're on a hard surface, you can writhe around and abuse your body, but he was never satisfied with his spazzing in the movie.



How did *Surf II* go over?

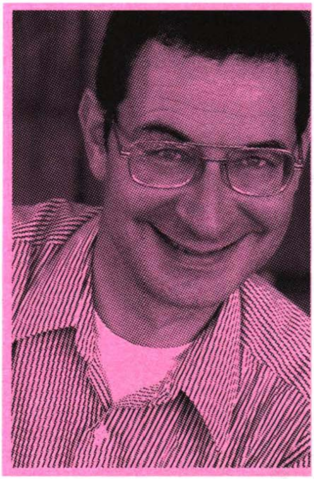
Opening night was at a place called The Coronet in Westwood. There was a huge turnout of kids, many of whom couldn't get in because they were underage. We'd gotten an R rating. *Porky's* had been a big hit six months prior, so we'd deliberately gone R. The theater had filled up and a lot of these other kids wanted their friends to get in, so they actually ripped the two back doors off and basically destroyed the entire theater. They did so much damage to The Coronet on opening night that they threw us out; the premiere was perfectly fitting for the movie.

The target audience loved it. Their parents hated it. My family hated it. People that I was doing other business with hated it. I remember going to meetings and people would find out that I'd done this movie and that was it. I remember that one of our editors had worked with Steven Spielberg on something. *Surf II* had aired on HBO, and Spielberg called her and said, "What is your name doing on *this* movie??" [Laughs.] I was working on a serious writing career, and had to be very careful about the company I was in when I brought up *Surf II*. It was either extremely positive, or "Get out of my office!"

How do you feel about it when you watch it now?

I'm amazed how well the film still plays, and I guess it works overall. There were a number of shots that were stuck in by the executive producers after they'd decided they wanted an R rating, like the pair of big tits whacking the fat boy in the face...and most of the "bonus boob" shots, really. These shots don't even match the rest of the film if you look at the cinematography. Some of it looks like a lecherous old guy's fantasy rather than a good-natured beach party spoof, which is what I was after. That part was embarrassing. George and Ron and I begged those guys not to put that stuff in, but I didn't have that control.

Watching it 25 years later, I guess it's pretty funny. We set out to make the most brain-dead movie of all time. In that regard, I believe we succeeded admirably. If you're asking if there's anything I would have done differently...I'd have done *everything* differently.



EDDIE DEEZEN

"Menlo Schwartzer" – *SURF II*

DAM: How did you become Hollywood's leading nerd icon?

ED: I'd had a couple early auditions, and I lied about having done work before. Believe it or not, one of my earliest was for *King Kong*, the Jessica Lange version. But I didn't get it. And then came *Grease*, where there was a call for actors. I went up, and Cheryl Ladd was in the room, all these tough guys, y'know. It was a huge casting call but I was the only geek. So I read for the producers, and I saw them turn to each other and nod. I felt like I did really good there. I had my hair combed back with Bryl Creem and I had a Pee-wee Herman suit on, with the bow tie and all that. And this was before Pee-wee! So I auditioned, and they gave me the role. I was so happy, but a week later I get a call saying they wrote Eugene out.

I was devastated. And as corny as it sounds, my agent and I went to church and lit some candles—and I'm Jewish!—but the next day they called me and said Eugene was back in.

But you'd never had a starring role until *Surf II*...

When *Surf II* came along, I'd done *Grease*, I'd done *1941*, *Laserblast*...I got a call from Randall Badat and the producer George Braunstein. It was one of those great times when they just wanted to give me the part. I didn't have to audition. It was like Jack Nicholson, you feel so cool.

I went in, they were very nice, wonderful people. I remember talking to 'em, meeting the cast and I decided that I wanted the part. To be honest, I was just jumping from film to film. They said I was going to get the lead, so I took it right off the bat: that was the only theatrically released film where I was the first-billed. I was very excited.

I had high hopes, and I remember going to a screening and it just didn't go over all that well. It was all right, but I was a little disappointed. Early on, a guy walked out, and I thought, "Oh, this is terrible. It's not what I dreamed of. It's not going to be mainstream."

It's such a crazy party comedy...what was it like on set?

As crazy as the movie is, I remember the shoot being relatively disciplined. It wasn't chaotic: we followed the script. I do recall that there were a lot of punks. There were just a bunch of punks around. I was surrounded. My friend Mark was one of them, and he was a punk guy in real life. He was the only one I knew. One of them was sort of a tough guy and would pull some of that type of thing on set.

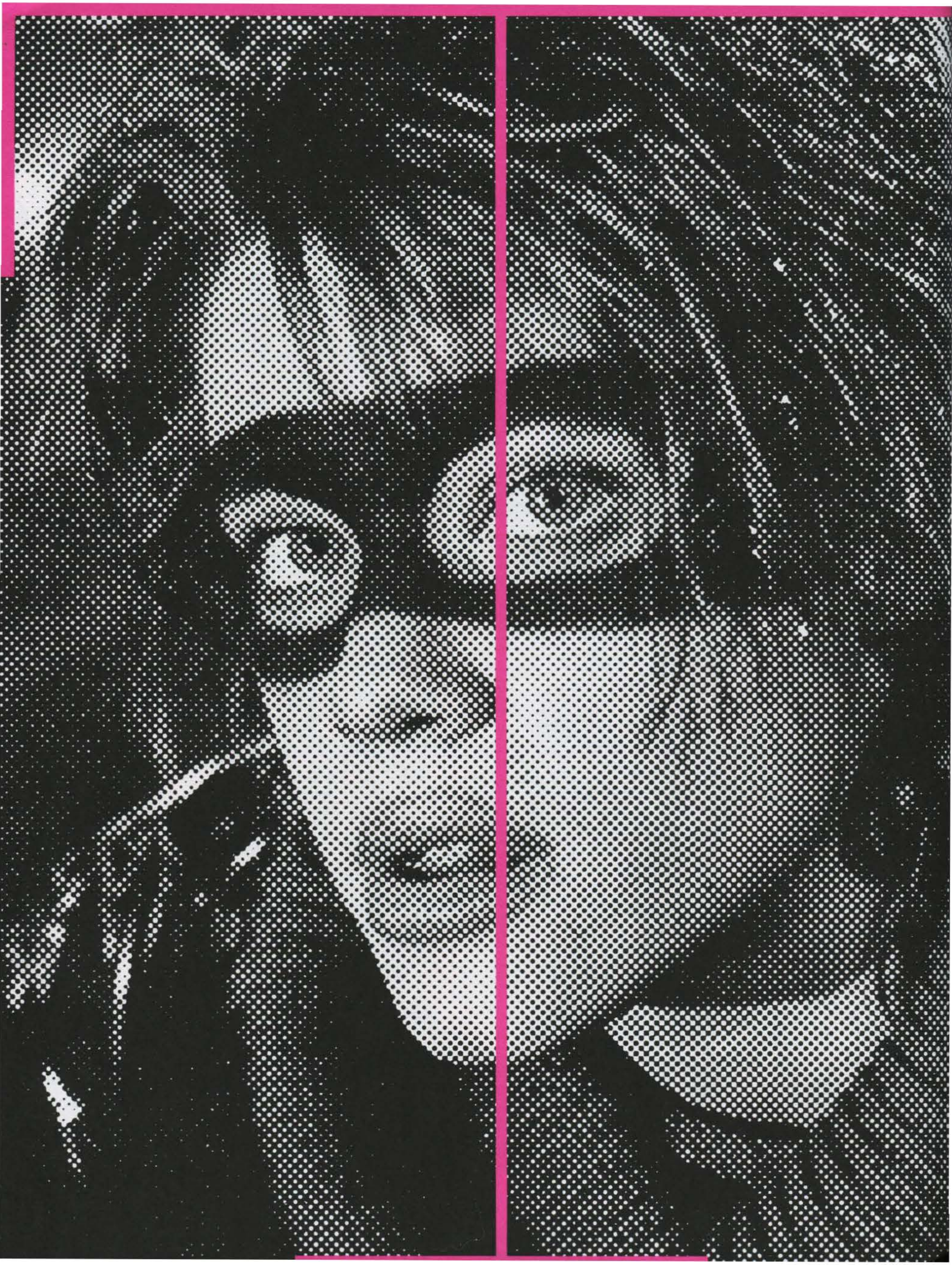
The soundtrack had some of that music on it. That was a great soundtrack! It was supposed to come out but it never did, I guess because the movie tanked. I enjoyed being surrounded with all that stuff. Some of the bands, like Oingo Boingo, had some really great stuff. I don't like the new bands now, but some of that was good music.

There were the girls. A LOT of cute girls. Cute, flirtatious girls in bikinis, which I LOVE. They'd give me massages, and I loved that. But my co-star Linda Kerridge was very straight-laced. She was a proper English girl. How did they ever get her for that part anyway? She was distinguished and beautiful. The guys were crazy over her...she was a knockout! I got to be good friends with Ron Palillo, who played Horshack on *Welcome Back Kotter*. Actually, I ended up playing opposite all The Sweathogs in different projects. Lyle Waggoner was great in the movie. He loved the women. He was a hooouund. And he was hilarious. I forgot just how funny that movie is.

Your character was a villainous mad scientist, but still the lead. What did you think of him?

The character of Menlo isn't a mean guy. He's a tortured genius. He was a nerd and wanted to have revenge. An unhappy guy that wanted to get even, that's all. He wouldn't kill anyone. He's just not the type. I don't think he'd even torture somebody. But he had bottled-up anger from just being picked on for so long.

I don't know if anyone else told you this, but originally Menlo was supposed to be named "Stinky Schwartzer." But I just hated that, so I changed it to Menlo. Like all nerds, he's a sad character. That's how it is with comedians, the sad clowns. People have tragic things happen in their lives and they turn to comedy. The nerd takes it even further, I think. Bad childhood, bad life...I never fit in at school. They didn't even have the term "nerd" yet, but I was one. That's how it is, y'know. But everyone in show biz—comedian or not—is trying to compensate for something.



TANK GIRL

Dir. Rachel Talalay / 1995

Futuristic adventures of a twitchy underfed pixie.

The most terrible major studio comic book adaptation of all time, and the highest budget ever allotted to a film with a punk protagonist. Originally serialized in British print anthology *Deadline*, Alan Martin and Jamie Hewlett's smarmy post-apocalyptic party comic makes an incredibly awkward transition to live action. Lori Petty takes the lead role, a spastically spunky devil-may-care desert scavenger with an impossible variety of get-ups and hairdos that'd make actual punks run for cover.

In the wastelands, the Department of Water & Power rules with an iron, fascist fist attached to madman Kesslee (Malcolm McDowell). When they learn Tank Girl and her sand rat friends have been siphoning water, the department sends in a squad of ruthless exterminators that leave her the only survivor. In her agonizingly cutesy way, she embarks on a mission of justice. Enlisting the aid of mousy plane mechanic Jet Girl (Naomi Watts!), she outfits a military tank with gaudy day-glo attachments and a sub-Lollapalooza paint job. At this point the viewer both expects and deserves an action-packed vengeance run. Instead, the filmmakers provide an unendurable musical number with Ann Magnuson. The girls enlist the aid of The Rippers, a pack of stoned anthropomorphic kangaroos, one of whom is played by Ice-T. And just when it can't possibly get any worse, there's a slam poetry performance from another marsupial with a saxophone. Tank Girl ends up romantically involved with kind-hearted kanga Booga, but the producers opted to remove a shot of the two of them fully nude, basking in post-coital afterglow.

This major studio money-burner fills the viewer with an incredible hunger for suicide. However, it's possible it can still be watched safely, mainly because if the cast and crew of *Tank Girl* have any integrity at all, they've already cleaned out the gun store. (*ZC*)

TAPEHEADS

Dir. Bill Fishman / 1988

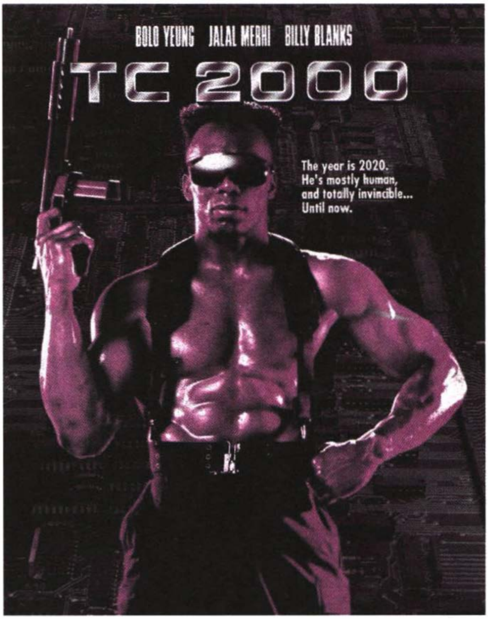
Two losers (Tim Robbins and John Cusack) try to make their living producing music videos.

In the late '80s/early '90s independent VHS wave, this film was a cult staple, but now it seems that spark has faded. I guess the youngsters these days just don't appreciate a good Doug E. Fresh cameo. Though admittedly dated, this film is fun and studded with many memorable little moments. Cusack doesn't look like his normal adorable self, sporting a weasel-thin mustache and slicked-back hair. The soundtrack features the Circle Jerks, Dead Kennedys and Robbins' alter ego Bob Roberts. Jello Biafra has a cameo towards the end as an FBI agent who mentions Jello Biafra. The best bands in the film are fictional. One such group, Cube Squared, is three longhaired Fabio-esque dudes who lip-sync to a Swedish version of Devo's "Baby Doll." Fishbone, who also add a few tunes to the soundtrack, show up as Ranchbone, their mohawked singer dresses as a cowboy. Stiv Bators' late-era Lords of the New Church play metal band The Blender Children, who get killed by a spy lab satellite. Weird Al is cranky. Bobcat Goldthwait is surprisingly normal. There's a sex tape in the film where the great Clu Gulager gets peanut butter smeared on his face by the equally talented Susan Tyrrell. How can so much character-actor gold fit in one movie? But wait, there's also Ted Nugent, Mike Nesmith (who also produced), Sy Richardson, Doug McClure, Lyle Alzado and Xander Berkeley. The man who steals the show from all is aged Caucasian hip-hop wildman King Cotton, who raps about Hollywood restaurant Roscoe's Chicken & Waffles. Watch him rip it up as he scratches a waffle on a turntable. Yo! (*BC*)

TC 2000

Dir. T.J. Scott / 1993

A roundhouse kick to sci-fi's nuts.


BOLO YEUNG JALAL MERHI BILLY BLANKS
TC 2000
The year is 2020.
He's mostly human,
and totally invincible...
Until now.

Weeeee-oww! A direct-to-video post-apocalyptic throwaway starring Tae-Bo master Billy Blanks and "World's Strongest Asian" Bolo Yeung? One, please!!! The world is poisoned, mankind is forced to live underground, maniacs rule the surface, etc, etc. Blanks plays Jason Storm, a no-nonsense "tracker" prone to fighting crime and kicking face. He also enjoys honing his culinary skills while listening to futuristic erotic jazz. A surface gang called The Picassos dresses and acts as intimidatingly as gypsy transvestites, but still manage to kill Storm's partner and have him kicked off the underworld Tracker Force. Betrayed by his superior The Controller, he joins surface-dwelling vigilante Sumai (Yeung) to hit crime at its source. Many bruises ensue. Sumai is an expert in combat, though insists on donning his ninja camouflage, which seems to be made entirely of placemats and trash bags. Meanwhile, Storm's murdered colleague is revived as the titular cyborg in a shameless (and failed) attempt to suckle on *RoboCop*'s cash-engorged teat. The nuked Los Angeles depicted here is really no worse than the real thing; gangs, prostitutes and scabby hobos are the only denizens of the city's heart, and a sickly punk is among a crowd of cheering streetfight spectators. (*ZC*)

TCHAO PANTIN

Dir. Claude Berri / 1983

Unlikely unions are forged in the alleys of Paris.

Bensoussan (Richard Anconina) is a clean-cut, likeable young drug dealer who befriends older gas station attendant Lambert (Coluche). One morning, the boy is smitten by the visually jarring europunk Lola (Agnès Soral) as she passes by with her cluster of ratted, bullet-belted friends. She agrees to give him a date in exchange for a ride on his moped, but changes her mind when he arrives outside the rock club. Jilted, he returns home just in time to be badly beaten by one of his associates. Lambert patches him up and asks, "What about the punk?" He replies, "She's a bitch." Nevertheless, he picks her up a few nights later and takes her back to his studio apartment, skipping all conversation and effectively kicking off a standard unhealthy physical relationship.

In an unexpected flash, he's murdered before their emotion-free romance can continue. Lambert sets out for vengeance while the unwitting Lola enjoys an incredibly rowdy show at the nearby punk dive. As the wall-to-wall pogo kids spasm and grin, the band's leering vocalist lets loose with what translates to:

"To hell with the clean look!
To hell with funk and rap!
Time for some outrageous hard rock!"

The audience shrieks with excitement. Lambert arrives at the club, a pudgy, sad-eyed middle-aged man lost in a sea of low fashion and bright colors. He scans the slam pit for Lola, teens parting for him under the assumption that he's a dad or—worse yet—a cop. Finally, a shock-haired paraplegic introduces Lambert to her, and she's informed of her quasi-boyfriend's passing. At first she feigns disinterest, but soon agrees to help bring the killers to justice. Lambert proves to be a surprisingly two-fisted hero, fearlessly taking on the drug ring from its backstreet operators on up. The aimless Lola is drawn to his sense of purpose and the two build a powerful friendship as he puts himself at ever-increasing risk.

Tchao Pantin is played very well as both an action picture and drama. Coluche is incredible as the wrathful kamikaze drunk Lambert, and would sadly die only three years later at the age of 41. Lola is one of the most fully-realized punk characters of the era. She, her crew and punk culture as a whole are treated with genuine unbiased regard—if not respect—and Soral's impressive performance will actually have you believe that her closest friend in the world is a bald divorcé in a cheap suit. (*ZC*)

TEACHERS

Dir. Arthur Hiller / 1984

A dilapidated urban high school has been thrown to the wolves by the heartless administration and hippie sellout teachers. Grizzled, jaded alcoholic Alex Jurel (Nick Nolte) is the only faculty member that can redeem this den of academic and moral depravity.

Another tale of a dusty, embittered hippie that regains the chutzpah to "fight the system," and while hippies are most certainly not punk, fighting the system is. The fact that the lead is played by the king of cantankerous washouts, Nick Nolte, may be the movie's one saving grace.

Teachers is an uneasy mix of '80s off-the-wall comedy and dead-serious afterschool special melodrama; the movie juxtaposes scenes of an escaped mental patient/history teacher bringing the past to life by donning the costumes of various historical figures (Custer, George Washington) with scenes of violence, statutory rape and general malaise. I was constantly being thrown off-kilter... one moment I'm watching Richard Mulligan from *Empty Nest* crossing an imagined Delaware in presidential garb, and the next moment Laura Dern is squishing her face up in preparation for that unparalleled crying technique, prompted by the revelation that the gym teacher got her pregnant.

While the opening credits gave me a swell of excitement akin to a perfectly aimed stage dive (Crispin Glover, Laura Dern, Morgan Freeman, Judd Hirsch, Nick Nolte, Ralph Macchio), the movie turned out to be more comparable to a face-first belly flop. I really can't (and definitely don't want to) give a plot synopsis as the movie is series of skits cobbled together, betraying any sort of consistent tone or story. There's the hogwash thread of a school that can only be saved by its burnt-out ex-peacenik leader, but that's constantly being interrupted by the myriad of convoluted subplots.

To its credit, the movie has pretty heavy punk/new wave ambience. Punks are classic signifiers for an environment gone wrong. Be it a school, the streets or a post-apocalyptic future, stick in some misfits and the viewer is immediately aware that all is lost. *Teachers*' most prominent punk moment occurs when an exasperated teacher whines, "Not those pants again!" in reference to a kid sitting in the front row, prominently displaying his hole-ridden jeans and bleached skunk stripe hairdo. Other than that, there are plenty of garish extras roaming the halls, and a few shots of girls with outrageous hair sitting in class. In conclusion, if you want to watch Nolte grumble and explode, watch *48 Hrs.* (SC)

TEARAWAY

Dir. Bruce Morrison / 1986

New Zealand punks battle a cheeseball plot and a bad Giorgio Moroder-knockoff soundtrack.

Tearaway was a real botched opportunity to make an interesting film about New Zealand's 1980s urban youth culture. There's great use of location, alternating between the squalid downtown scene and the lush bucolic 'burbs of "Queen City." Also fascinating is the examination of half white/half Maori punk gangs versus the more hardcore full-blooded Maori gangs. But alas, this is a tepid turd. It's hard to believe that this was scripted by the same Bill Baer who wrote the excellent NZ post-apocalypse movie *The Quiet Earth.* Maybe youth exploitation wasn't Baer's cup of tea, as his plot here is strictly by the numbers. The dialogue in the movie reminds me of those 1950s juvenile delinquent features written by 65-year-old hacks totally out of touch with their audience.

The tale involves an everypunk named Ska (Matthew Hunter), who spends his days working as a garbage man alongside his Maori mate Andrew (Mark Philisi). They rip businesses off on their route via breaking in and grabbing electronics and whatever else isn't nailed down. Ska's boss in this scummy enterprise is Jay Rider, local mob head and concert promoter. He also just happens to be pimping out Ska's sister Fran in the local "knocking shop" to pay off their drunken father's debts. Fran and Ska do what they must to support their two younger siblings, being as Dad has set up shop in a downtown bar with no intentions on ever returning home. At night, Ska and buddy Andrew battle meaninglessly with the pure-blood Maori gangs. Out of monotony? Lack of story? It's anyone's guess. That's the problem with this groaner: things happen to just barely push along the threadbare plot. There's a silly romance subplot between Ska and a rich girl from the "right side of the tracks." All this goes on with nary a real punk band in sight. What we instead see when our boys go downtown is a live performance from two dull-as-dishwater groups that look like they were thrown together especially for the movie. We get only one blip of some possibly actual NZ hardcore when Ska is listening to his headphones at home.

One thing I can't depth charge in this movie is the two lead performances by Hunter and Philisi. Their non-professional acting-in-the-moment style is the only aspect of the film with any legitimacy. Maybe there's a more genuine New Zealand punk film as yet unseen, but this definitely isn't it. *(JS)*

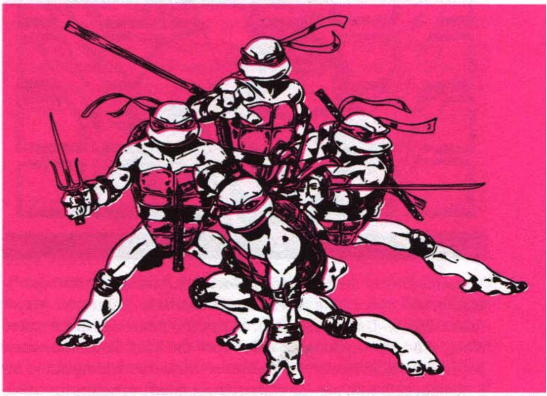
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Dir. Steve Barron / 1990

Vigilante mutant turtles fight crime and befriend a few humans, all while being incredibly obnoxious.

In this film, a single individual wears three *different* Sid Vicious T-shirts. The fact of the matter is this: the tradition of Hollywood Shorthand is in full play. For instance, wearing black means you're weird and depressed; if you're male and a hairdresser, you are most certainly a flaming homosexual; dyed hair and headphones means you're probably a shocking and eccentric babysitter at the door of Steve Martin or Tim Allen. In *TMNT,* it manifests as that tried-and-true tradition of punk equaling decay, delinquency and dystopia. And who better to represent utter chaos and misanthropy than Sid Vicious? The Sex Pistols are the instantly recognizable pariahs of punk rock; a lazy costume designer's go-to guys when attempting to express disdain for authority and society. So, we have a character that's no more punk than Margaret Thatcher wearing a variety of Sids. This "individual," Danny, inhabits a boring and pointless subplot of afterschool special proportions, and certainly detracts from the hijinks of a foursome of overgrown turtles, allotting less time to watching pizza fall on a giant rat's head.

TMNT delivers lots of violence and some surprisingly grim cinematography, along with much cartoon humor and an adult version of teenspeak. Created by Jim Henson's Workshop, the turtles look great and sound like three Keanu Reeves and one Andrew Dice Clay. Their sensei Splinter is the rat incarnate of Tony Robbins; flapping his gums relentlessly, spouting many a new age platitude mixed with fortune cookie mysticism. The human characters, Casey Jones (Elias Koteas) and April O'Neil (Judith Hoag), engage in a horrific romantic comedy subplot, which also detracts from the mutant turtles' breakdancing and shenanigans. Overall, the film has enough thudding fists and violence for the kids and enough inane humor for the suffering adult. Unfortunately, kids' movies spawned by comic books and merchandising tend to be almost all filler, and such is the case with *TMNT*. There is lots of noise and flash emanating from the screen, but little to grasp onto.



However, you would be able to grasp onto the insane mohawk worn by a bass playing punker in the Pinocchio-inspired Stromboli-esque warehouse full of thieves and degenerates run by ninja crime lords The Foot Clan. We get a quick close shot of the punker jamming hardcore on the bass. The warehouse environment is pretty punk as well, with a large skate ramp, video games and all the cigarettes a little delinquent could ever dream of. Later on, we get a back view of aforementioned punker with a pal who might have based his fashion and hairstyle on those later Discharge albums, an odd mix of metal militia and crusty post-apocalyptic duds, with a gravity-defying mane of jet-black hair flattened in the back like a skunk's tail and reaching for the sky like the Statue of Liberty's glorious spikes on top. And finally, let's not forget the scene where Casey Jones asks a turtle, "You a punker? I hate punkers." *(SC)*

TENEBRE

Dir. Dario Argento / 1982

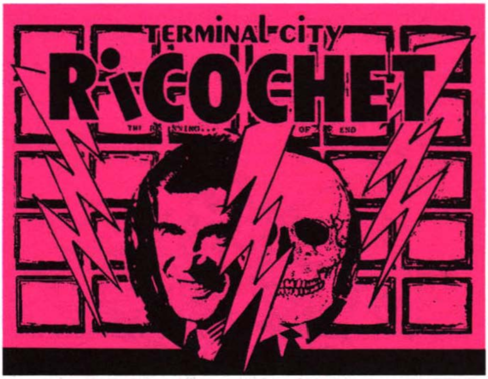
A serial killer steals murder ideas from books.

Watch a legendary Italian schmuck sleepily develop a plot just so he can get fancy with a camera and hack up naked ladies. Brutalizing may not be my favorite dish on the menu, but even if it were, would I want to wash it down with a tall glass of lackluster?! No grazie! At least the soundtrack is great. Too bad it only plays during the murder sequences. This movie could have been better as strictly a dance party. The punks appear as little harbingers of doom while character actor John Saxon waits for his death in an outdoor mall. One is outfitted in black leather pants, a black studded jacket and a mohawk. The other wears a large trench coat and awesome skunk hairdo. They are, of course, doing what background punks do best: nothing. (*BLB*)

TERMINAL CITY RICOCHET

Dir. Zale Dalen / 1990

No nuclear wars, no viral outbreaks, no catastrophes...
the world has just plain fallen apart.



Terminal City is the epicenter of society's failures, bombarded by earthbound space junk and ruled by heartless technocrat Mayor Ross Glimore. Under his watch, artists and musicians are arrested along with anyone else who dares rock the boat. Rebellious adult paperboy Alex lives with his conservative mother, hiding out in his basement bedroom playing guitar, surrounded by posters for bands like D.O.A., Nomeansno and I, Braineater. He's arrested for no reason and labeled as a "rock and roll terrorist," but escapes along with an amnesiac goalie and a performance artist. Their greatest foe is revealed as Glimore's right-hand man, sadistic police squad controller Bruce Coddle (Jello Biafra). The fugitive trio eventually kidnaps the mayor's son, a closet punk who hates his father and gives the dissenters the power they need. D.O.A.'s Joey "Shithead" Keithley appears as a cop, and a whiplashing performance by the band closes the feature.

Terminal City Ricochet makes many points about politics and media...one might say *too* many. But to the filmmakers' credit, the humor keeps things moving. Much of this can be credited to Peter Breck's rock-solid performance as the villainous Glimore. A soundtrack album was pressed by Alternative Tentacles Records, but the movie itself never found a proper release, clearly suppressed by some bloodthirsty secret fascist government agency. (*ZC*)

TERMINAL USA

Dir. Jon Moritsugu / 1993

Filth-wallower Moritsugu takes another stab at everything.

"This production was presented by viewers like you." Here is a story of a nice Japanese-American family: drug-dealing son Kazumi; cheerleader sister Holly; math genius Marvin; and then there's Ma, who dutifully cares for their disabled grandpa. Their lawyer says they stand to inherit a giant pile of "buckage" off of the old man if he dies, but Ma won't allow them to kill him off (she's far too hooked on his morphine, which she shoots up at regular intervals). The father is a proud Japanese man who speaks about family heritage. He realizes his son Kazumi is a loser, but doesn't mind since the Day of Reckoning is upon them. It's an everyday Japanese family that sells drugs to skinheads, give lawyers blowjobs, get shot at by priests names "Fagtoast," jack off to skinhead magazines and date aliens. This lovely window into the home of Kazumi's family was a part of a PBS series so, as unbelievable as it may seem, this film was shown at least once to the public-at-large, albeit in an edited version. According to Moritsugu, it was even considered for Northwest Airlines as an in-flight film for their Japan/U.S.A. passenger planes. PBS used to receive a portion of their funding from The Grant for the Arts Foundation which is (or was) a U.S.A. federally-funded institution, and this is one project that I wouldn't mind my tax dollars going to. (*JH*)

THE TERMINATOR

Dir. James Cameron / 1984

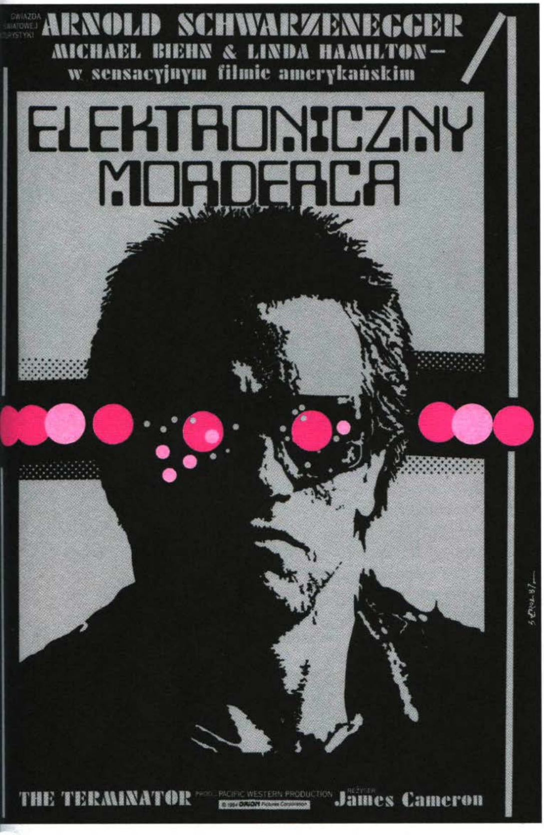
An unstoppable android blasts through time to murder
mankind's last hope.

If *The Terminator* were to exemplify a musical genre, it would be crossover, that inglorious melding of hardcore punk and metal. The film is a 15-year-old headbanger's beautiful construction, from the opening credits (reminiscent of Voivod album art) to the piles of dead cops, slain at the hands of an Austrian automaton from the future. The film weds punk aesthetics and metal rigidness to birth a satisfying and efficient sci-fi action feature complete with '80s ultraviolence.

When Schwarzenegger first appears, it's like Venus rising from the half shell. He truly is the future: a robotic stallion with little talent but an undeniable onscreen magnetism. As Arnie walks the streets of 1980s LA in search of some much-needed clothes, he inevitably runs into some punks, and these fashionable troglodytes are some of the finest Hollywood has ever devised. First off, Bill Paxton, complete with tire-tread makeup on his face, is the leader of this terrible trio. To complement his "I just had my face flattened by a motor scooter" look, his hair's styled in deep blue spikes and enough chains to start a dogwalking service. The other two misfits aren't as full-on as Paxton, but when has *anyone* been as full-on as Paxton? The dude with the tidal wave 'do and trench coat may be familiar to some as the Night Slasher in *Cobra*, and here he's pure gateway punk, somewhere between new wave and unabashed mania. The third "punker" is the least inspired, wearing some lazily-applied Apache war paint and blasé rags. It must be noted that this poseur dies most violently, furthering the idea that this film is speed metal in celluloid form.

The Terminator makes his rounds, killing all women in the Los Angeles area with the name "Sarah Connor" in order to ensure that his primary target never conceives the baby that will eventually grow to squash the machines' reign. He looks conspicuously like a heavy metal jock, his hair perfectly styled, drab clothes, and an icy, oafish demeanor. However, after the robot is thwarted by Reese (a soldier from the future sent back in time to protect Sarah, played by Michael Biehn), his determination and fashion noticeably mount in intensity.

The Terminator realizes he can't confine himself to the metal aesthetic, which upon outward appearances is wild and unhinged, but in actuality is ultimately staid and confined to a certain stylistic routine. This was (maybe not coincidentally) how his killing technique had expressed itself previous to his encounter with Reese. After the Terminator gets in a brutal car crash, he emerges a crossover metal/punk. In fact, he looks like a member of the early incarnation of TSOL, before they went goth. His hair is in a wild and fire-singed spike, his clothes are tattered and ripped; the perfect fusion of both genres. Schwarzenegger now dons some shades and a motorcycle jacket, and goes on a relentless cop-killing spree in which an entire precinct is riddled with bullets. It's like Motörhead and Crass via Body Count appearing before the viewer's eyes.


GWIAZDA
ŚWIATOWEJ
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
MICHAEL BIEHN & LINDA HAMILTON —
w sensacyjnym filmie amerykańskim
ELEKTRONICZNY MORDERCA
THE TERMINATOR
PROD. PACIFIC WESTERN PRODUCTION
© 1984 ORION Pictures Corporation
REŻYSER
James Cameron

If the Terminator is the cross-pollinated subcultural icon, then Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) and Reese represent mainstream lower-middle class values. Their mission is extremely practical and goal-oriented (escape death and save the human race), as is their relationship (procreate!). And while the Terminator is certainly driven as well, his methods and objective are recklessly destructive. He has no future plans after his aim of killing Sarah Connor has been achieved. While Sarah and Reese's sexual congress might have grown out of a certain desperation and sadness, its ultimate outcome is the continuance of the human race. Sarah is a waitress and Reese a soldier; together they form the archetypal middle-American couple through their professions alone.

The nihilism of the Terminator is certainly punk, but Reagan-era politics rear their ugly head in the form of family values and the willingness to sacrifice everything in order to secure them. Me, I'm with the robot. (*SC*)

TERMINUS

Dir. Pierre-William Glenn / 1987

A dust-choked futuristic adventure starring a jive-talking bus.

This centerless journey through technologically-advanced wastelands features *Raiders of the Lost Ark* co-star Karen Allen driving a super-vehicle (and her career) into The Danger Zone. She plays Gus, a defiant wanderer in a hostile world, whose only friends are a bus named Monster and her bleached bionic amputee boyfriend Stump (Johnny Hallyday, often called "the French Elvis Presley"). She meets the latter after being imprisoned by a squad of militant psychotics in post-apocalyptic gear, facepaint and angular clip jobs. Stump escapes with Monster and hits the badlands in search of a sterilized control center run by Jürgen Prochnow (in one of three roles here) and a hyper-intelligent 8-year-old played by the pre-adolescent nogoodnik from *RoboCop 2*. This child and the chatty bus provide the only emotion in the film. Guess which one has a gigantic pair of rubber lips on his dashboard. (*ZC*)

TERROR FIRMER

Dir. Lloyd Kaufman / 1999

A series of gruesome accidents and a deranged serial killer plague the cast and crew of a low-budget film.

Here we have the ultimate Troma film. *Terror Firmer* is basically one giant Tromatic in-joke, as it's a fictionalized look behind the scenes of the latest *Toxic Avenger* film. Lloyd Kaufman (the film's director as well as Troma's head honcho) plays a blind director trying to make sense of a chaotic movie set. Complicating matters are a series of horrific accidents and a homicidal hermaphroditic serial killer. Like every Troma movie there's tons of excessive gore, plenty of awkward nudity, a car running over a person's head, an abundance of tasteless humor and some serious pacing problems. There are a couple of punks on the film crew. One (whose name is "Asshole P.A." in the credits) has a silver/blue tri-hawk and a studded denim jacket. He moons everybody, displaying the "fuck you" written on his butt cheeks. When he gets hassled by some cops, Asshole P.A. says, "Fuck this shit, my dad is rich." There's also a super-tall rocker in spandex pants, random background punks, lots of punk rock T-shirts, an appearance from Nick Zedd and one sequence transforms into a Lunachicks music video. In many ways, Troma's "make your own damn movie" ethos parallels a lot of punk rock ideals. And that's the cause of my Tromatic conundrum, as I have to give some respect to Tromaville for their philosophy and vision...I just wish I liked their movies. (*SH*)

TERROR IN THE AISLES

Dir. Andrew J. Kuehn / 1984

A short bald man and RoboCop's partner present movie shrapnel.

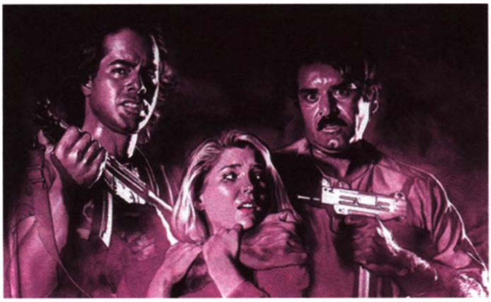
Venerable genre actor Donald Pleasence joins repeat De Palma victim Nancy Allen in hosting a series of crucial horror clips in this unnecessary but entertaining collection. The pair narrates from inside a crowded movie theater, surrounded by stoners, teens, geeks and grandpas. The segments onscreen are sourced from *Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein*, the monumentally grimy *Vice Squad* and everything in between. While Allen extols the visceral pleasures of "terror films," an unkempt greaseball N.Y. punk enters the auditorium in all his sleazy majesty, rock pins and swastikas scattered across his leatherwear. He hunkers down to enjoy the show, sunglasses firmly in place. (*ZC*)

TERROR SQUAD

Dir. Peter Moris / 1987

Terrorists invade...Kokomo, Indiana?!?

It's business as usual at a standard all-American high school: the computer nerd ogles digital boobs, the campus longhair swaps guitar solos with the elderly janitor and a crimson-highlighted, denim-dedicated, tenuously new wave quasi-metalhead scoffs at the football hero's seduction attempts. Little do they realize that a sinister Arab plot will soon transform the nuclear-reliant suburb into a full-scale war zone. For some reason, the terrorist invasion's entry point is the school's detention hall, trapping the aforementioned students in a web of anti-imperialist rage.



Leading the good fight is geometrically-jawed middle income Hollywood icon Chuck Connors (*The Rifleman; Skinheads*). His extended high-speed street battles result in several scenes of innocent bystanders being mowed down by tire-shredding sedans. In fact, the film's first chase scene covers a full 25 minutes and contains a record number of massive explosions for a movie of such limited means.

The middling aesthetic of the school's would-be punk is enough to raise skepticism, and her street credibility is further stretched when she utters the phrase "Far out." A pink lightning bolt across her temple and an industrial sized studded gauntlet are her only defenses. (*ZC*)

TERRORGRAM

Dir. Stephen M. Kienzle / 1988

An anthology film best enjoyed by the blind and deaf.

James Earl Jones probably earned ten bucks and a can of raviolis for his opening narration, credited as "The Voice of Retribution." In the first of the film's three stories, titled "Heroine Overdose," an S&M psychopath menaces a semi-topless studs-n-leather victim with a red coif dye job. The maniac is all jagged teeth and zippers with a bone-white mohawk protruding from his metal-encrusted bondage mask. The entire scene turns out to be a production segment from "Alan Smithee's" latest misogynist exploitation picture. Back in his office, Smithee receives his Terrorgram, a supernatural delivery that—in this case—causes all gender roles to reverse. He's soon under attack from female construction workers, lady cops, she-bikers, curvy auto mechanics and even an all-woman bowling league. To make matters worse, his chest hair gets ripped out and his elderly mother calls him a "dickweed." The mohawked nutzoid resurfaces, knocking off Smithee's toupee and terrorizing his tiger-striped briefs with a rechargeable carving knife. Two more impotent, terror-free fairytales round out this straight-to-video blunder. (*ZC*)

TERRORVISION

Dir. Ted Nicolau / 1986

A mutant space monster invades a Hollywood
family's satellite dish.

There are two types of people in this world: those who enjoy fun... and adults. *TerrorVision* is 100% adult repellent and ranks with heavy hitters like *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* and *The Monster Squad* as a solid monolith of pure, undistilled entertainment.

This horror-comedy rampager was discovered by many as late '80s syndicated TV filler. Despite its R rating, the movie ran in post-midnight slots completely unedited, which isn't all that outrageous. *TerrorVision* contains sexual humor *but* no nudity, buckets of slime *but* no actual blood and manages to run its entire course without a single word of profanity (unless you count "butthole," which is said multiple times). It's a perfect kid's horror film, pure lowbrow entertainment that's stupid in only the smartest ways.

When polyester swingers The Puttermans (Mary Woronov and Gerrit Graham) set up their swanky new entertainment system, they inadvertently beam in a carnivorous galacto-beast that can attack (and devour!) through the TV. Luckily, Grampa (Bert Remsen) is a shell-shocked survivalist with a military-grade arsenal, and he and young Sherman (a wee Chad Allen) are ready to blast the menace clean off the map. New wave pixie daughter Suzy (Diane Franklin) is too busy to notice, jaunting around with her guitar-shredding metal maniac date O.D. (Jon Gries). Eventually, the survivors band together, but just to make a few bucks by selling the monster to a TV horror program hosted by a woman in a rubber snake wig.

TerrorVision is caffeinated jackhammer molded into a movie. It's goopy, hilarious, action-packed...everything that makes life good. Also, it's one of the few intentionally campy features that actually entertains, and boy, does it ever...TO THE ULTIMATE *MAX*. Everyone onscreen gloriously sheds their dignity to power through a ludicrous script in the most nobly ridiculous way. Woronov and Graham are fantastic as the oblivious, swingin' parents, and Remsen is a comic powerhouse as Grampa. The 61-year-old actor was a Robert Altman regular throughout the '70s and had even worked with Lee Marvin and Elvis Presley, but here has no problem digging into low-budget monster mayhem. His bit about "Hallie-ween masks scaring the poop

outta ya" remains one of the best-delivered comic lines on celluloid. The 24-year-old Diane Franklin got top billing, having played the female lead in '80s staples like *The Last American Virgin* and *Better Off Dead.* Following (or possibly because of) *TerrorVision*, her roles shrank until she more or less faded from the screen. But here she's a nonstop blur of valley girl hysterics, neon spandex and clashing hair dye. She'd be the film's most visually entertaining character if it wasn't for Jon Gries' unbelievable performance as O.D. Riley. In 1983, the unstoppable Gries embodied Hollywood's wildly inaccurate stereotyping of punk culture when he took the role of arcade wildman King Vidiot in *Joysticks*. Here, he does the same for metal, creating a brilliant parody of thrashers while infusing his leather-sporting, permed rocker with endearing, simple-minded nobility. In his first scene, O.D. introduces himself to junior militant Sherman. Noting the child's protective gear, he clomps his foot down on the living room table and shows off his size 11s. "Hey, little dude. You like metal? Kiss the boot!!" Clearly, anyone who'd say this to a 10-year-old is the most raging headbanger to ever roam the Earth, and I give a frown to *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* for being too cowardly to take the stereotype to O.D.'s powerful extremes.

Another important aspect of the film is the perfectly herky-jerky new wave soundtrack by LA band The Fibonaccis. Grossly ignored throughout their career, the band released several albums, most notably their self-titled debut EP and the following 12" titled "Slow Beautiful Sex." Vocalist Magie Song was allegedly fluent in several languages and the band's albums contained songs in multiple dialects. They were a consistent presence in the Southern California scene for years without catching on nationally. I'm not sure how they ended up scoring this film, but their opening theme and "shredding metal" track (as O.D.'s unnamed band) add a huge amount to the movie's already-considerable heap of cockeyed '80s excess.

So ante up and show the colors of a true Fun Warrior by diving face first into the slime. A criminally underseen goldmine of wildness, *TerrorVision* features more rock delirium, protoplasmic goop and hilarious dialogue than this world deserves. In the words of the late O.D. Riley: *"Too rude!"* (*ZC*)

JON GRIES

"O.D." – *TERRORVISION*

JG: I remember when I auditioned for *TerrorVision*, I put on this big rock 'n' roll wig. The thing about that movie that made it so exciting for me was that it was shooting in Italy. Charles Band was shooting there because back then it was the cheap place to shoot. They'd go to Italy to make their low-budget movies, and then eventually they ended up going to Yugoslavia and places like that. I wanted to go Italy so bad. But when I was reading the script, I didn't quite get the film. I thought, "Yeah, I see that it's comedy, but it's kinda crappy." I didn't go in completely balls-to-the-wall, but I did go in with the big hair wig and no shirt on. Totally topless. And there were other actors sitting there in the waiting room who knew me personally, but didn't recognize that it was me. I just sat in the corner, looking down. Even though it was huge, that wig was so convincing that I really looked like someone from Mötley Crüe. They were probably all sitting there thinking "Forget it. That guy's the dude." I think I sold it so well, walking in dripping glam rock. My nails were painted black!

When I went in and read, I pretty much knew right off that I got the job. I remember walking out of the meeting knowing that I was gonna get the movie, sitting in the car and thinking, "Do I really want it?" [Laughs.] I had just done *Real Genius* and *Running Scared*. These were actual studio films and I'd begun that crossover to the "real world." And I do distinctly remember, a UPS truck had pulled up while I was in my car thinking about whether or not I was gonna do the movie. The delivery guy was unloading boxes and he took a tumble and fell. I decided then that I was definitely going to take this movie, because the alternative was to go carry boxes. The UPS man gave me my decision.

DAM: Did echoes of King Vidiot from *Joysticks* come back to you when you were wondering if you wanted to play such a caricature-style role?

Exactly. I didn't want to do that same thing again.

Was all the dialogue for O.D. written, because some of his lines seem like they couldn't have been scripted.

I think that there was some improvisation. The director, Ted Nicolau, was open to everything. I saw him recently, and we talked about *TerrorVision*. On set, he was always so bright, and said things like, "If something pops into your head and you know it's good, just go with it!" We had Gerrit Graham, Mary Woronov and Bert Remsen, all these hilarious, experienced actors. Woronov was punk. She was a full-on artist that lived on the fringe of society. I remember thinking that she was really cool. I loved hanging out with her.

They'd bounced us around a bunch of hotels in Italy, and the other actors ended up in this incredible one where there were a bunch of little bungalows, a great restaurant, everything. So when Gerrit Graham's character died, I got to move into his room at that great hotel. And Mary Woronov was in the next room. It was great.

You were playing the boyfriend of Diane Franklin, who got high billing in *TerrorVision* because she'd done some studio movies.

She was the young, upcoming star. She was the girl that we were all surrounding, kind of. She was really sweet. I remember I got angry because Nicolau kept telling me to "keep going over the top," but no one else was really as over the top in my scenes. Diane Franklin was supposed to be a wild new wave kid but she was playing it really close to the vest. She was more concerned about her persona, which shows a lot of poise on her part. But she wasn't as committed to letting loose as the rest of the cast.

For some movies, fun takes precedence over dignity.

Yes. But I do remember being wholly insecure about chewing the furniture again like in *Joysticks*. It was a six-week shoot, filmed in these famous Italian studios that didn't have any air conditioning. They'd fallen into disrepair. And oh man, it was hot. I was wearing that leather jacket nonstop, not to mention the wig. I was always melting.

O.D. was ahead of his time as a metalhead. He definitely had the big hair.

TETSUO 2: BODY HAMMER

Dir. Shinya Tsukamoto / 1992

Tetsuo gets mad and a gun pops out of his chest.

Engrossing eye-candy, though there are many points when you just can't tell what you're looking at. Lots of handheld camera work and many elements of experimental filmmaking heighten this above the average '90s Japanese science-fiction film. Sometimes it feels like a Nine Inch Nails video, but it makes up for its art-school irritation with amazing scenes of shirtless men screaming while working out. There's an artistic moment of a mohawked man giggling in fast motion. Continuity is no object, so there's no need to see the first film to enjoy this even more bizarre sequel. *(BC)*

THAT WAS THEN...THIS IS NOW

Dir. Christopher Cain / 1985

Two wayward buddies begin to grow apart as age and maturity encroach on their blissful delinquency.

Isn't it funny how hardscrabble youth can always be made to look better by the presence of punks? Such is the case with *That Was Then*. When we first see Mark (Emilio Estevez), he's wearing a sleeveless letterman jacket so we can assume that he either plays in a straight-edge band, or is a total jagstroke.

Though the two possibilities aren't entirely exclusive, the latter happens to be the case. He consistently displays his perpetual adolescent jock complex, whether it be referring to a penis as a "one-eyed trouser mouse" or becoming a jealous child when his pal Bryon (played by Craig Sheffer) starts dating. Bryon is growing up and growing out of the hooligan shenanigans that he and Mark engage in as a means of bonding, and subsequently, Mark becomes more petulant and stubborn.

Even though these two delinquents steal cars, disrespect women and are generally mean-spirited, they've got nothing on the punks, who are portrayed as evil incarnate and Cro-Magnon bullies. The main punk looks like the gentleman to the left of the fully erect man on the human evolutionary chart, if he was wearing a leather jacket and had a buzzcut, and the rest of the punks have clearly just crawled out of the primordial slime. At one point, the punks listen to a song in which the singer repeats, "I don't care!" about a million times, just in case the viewer wasn't aware of the nihilistic nature of these animals. The key scene of youth insanity comes when supreme punker Curly tries to bully an adolescent wasteoid into singing the most malevolent version of "Jingle Bells" I have ever heard. It made me hate Christmas even more.

As Estevez is responsible for the screenplay, he pointedly picked punks as the villains, and really hammered the slobbering trogs theme home, which I can't imagine comes from the source material (S.E. Hinton's young adult novel). However, Estevez has more than done his penance for such slander. Firstly, he appeared in all those *Mighty Ducks* films, and secondly, he has to deal with Charlie Sheen as a brother. Not to mention that he played a solid punk lead in *Nightmares* and *Repo Man*, back to back.

Beyond the punkbashing, the film is quite good for '80s teen fare. The characters are not slaves to a one-dimensional personality trait or ethnicity. The cinematography looks good without showboating, and the main players are actual humans rather than festering balls of hormones, why-be-normal stalkers or menstruating elitist cheerleaders. This film is certainly underrated as far as the '80s canon goes; it beats out Coppola's Hinton adaptation *The Outsiders*. Maybe because the film doesn't have the cloven hoofprint of John Hughes stamped all over it, or the blubbering sentimental slobber of his impish minion Chris Columbus, it's been overlooked and cast aside. *That Was Then...This Is Now* may be the ultimate artifact of the punks-as-villains ethos that has been perpetuated by mainstream cinema and mass media for decades. And for that alone, it is a worthwhile film. (*SC*)

THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE

Dir. Rolfe Kanefsky / 1992

A giant thing-in-the-woods kills sarcastic, unsuspecting teenagers in this self-aware farce.

So-so film rescued by a scene near the beginning where a group of misfits are compelled to party by a lake, jam to metal and smoke pot. This posse features a guy in a leopard-print jacket and torn shirt, and a dude with slicked-back hair wearing an oversized jacket with that ol' reliable anarchy symbol on it. Cyrus Voris plays the lead punk and later went on to write Hollywood trash like *Bulletproof Monk* and Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood*. I got excited thinking they were inevitable fodder for the movie's horrible creature, but no sooner have they shown up then they permanently vanish from the film, leaving the viewer feeling as if they've just eaten the last marshmallow from an otherwise full bowl of Lucky Charms. (*BC*)

THEY EAT SCUM

Dir. Nick Zedd (as Nick Zodiac) / 1979

Bestiality, cannibalism and genocide combine for true zaniness.

Zedd spins the Super 8-documented tale of a hateworn world at its own throat. A blustering father is run ragged by his cross-dressing dog-fellating son and a miserable daughter (Donna Death) who has jettisoned the family name in favor of a new identity as Suzi Putrid. Pop struggles to end her rampant sexual experimentation by setting

her up on a blind date. She has a mascara swastika on her cheek when the young suitor—a black albino—arrives to pick her up. She dumps a pot of spaghetti on his head and exits to perform a scathing set with her band The Mental Deficients. The fixated crowd is in the palm of her hand, and she instructs them to "kill the next person you see on the street and drink their blood!" While her obedient followers commit mass anthropophagia, Suzi busts up a canine fetish ring, shoots heroin with her uncle and reads a book on penis-enlargement techniques.

Later, three armchair malcontent outcasts argue about which is worse: disco or hippies. "Everyone's trying to be high class now... even the fuckin' Puerto Ricans!" When their roommate brings home an immaculately styled false punk from the line outside Studio 54, Suzi and company torture and humiliate her before forcing a live rat down the girl's throat. Suzi then eviscerates her with a rotating saw, splattering an enormous Nazi banner, and everyone dines on hot meat. Later, after she castrates a member of her dedicated fanbase, Suzi is murdered live on stage.

At this point, things are just getting warmed up. Zedd's spastic cinematic disruptor goes on to include stolen identity, decapitation, stop-motion robots, transvestite pedophilia and more. Suzi's surviving twin sister assassinates an anchorman, announces that her legions have irradiated New York's water supply, and publicly renames herself "Queen Death." Twenty years later, a scourge of disco mutants leads to a massive reckoning for the remaining members of humankind.

Pre-Video Age welfare filmmaking at its very, very best. Zedd's first feature is likely the most ambitious Super 8 film ever shot, and is certainly the most wildly entertaining of the New York's independent cinema output at that time. *They Eat Scum* opened at legendary punk club Max's Kansas City and undoubtedly drew critical comparisons to the work of John Waters and The Kuchar Brothers, but deserves much credit of its own for providing a completely unpretentious carnival of nuclear era punk comedy. (*ZC*)

THEY STILL CALL ME BRUCE

Dirs. James R. Orr & Johnny Yune / 1987

Asian-Americans should sue.

Would-be comedian Johnny Yune somehow got a second shot at big-screen failure with this follow-up to 1982's *They Call Me Bruce*. This time, Bruce is loose in search of an old Korean War pal, dropping countless racial gigglebombs along the way, none of which ignite. He befriends a bull, a prostitute named Polly and the members of a Guardian Angels-inspired vigilante force. When Polly runs afoul of white-collar gangsters, she and Bruce disguise themselves in new wave gear with facepaint and pastel hair hues. At the movie's climax, a child with a head injury gives Bruce a magic sock that allows him to defeat his enemies. I suppose there may have been a script, but it seems more likely that a crate of Bazooka Joe comics washed up on Korean shores. (*ZC*)

THIS IS AMERICA PART 2

Dir. Romano Vanderbes / 1980

The United States is finally exposed as a nation of savages.

The *This is America* series was a blusteringly inaccurate trilogy of European mondo-style docs covering the bizarre behavior of those animalistic goddamn creatures: us. With the first installment (released in the UK under the title *Crazy Ridiculous American People*), the filmmakers established a distanced, *National Geographic*-style investigative stance on everything from the Miss All-Bare America pageant to electroshock junk food-aversion tactics. Every dominant aspect of our culture was represented, like naked men who do the twist. Later, a fey gentleman expounds on the "delicious pleasures of the needle" while getting a tattoo of Satan on his penis. More uniquely American social aberrations include drive-in churches, brothels filled with elderly women, co-ed prisons and additional lies too numerous to mention here, with the punk movement noticeably absent.

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Though the staggering majority of these educational segments are as fictional as white blues, the 1978 film was a hit in European theaters, spawning a similarly constructed sequel. Like the first film, *Part 2* opens with The Dictators' version of "America the Beautiful," diving immediately into the previously-ignored subject of punk with coverage of the Dead Kennedys' Jello Biafra making his attempt at the San Francisco mayoral seat. The outspoken frontman is shown stating his platforms on the local news, and then getting marginally political on stage as the band performs their enduring gripe anthem "California Über Alles." Voice actor Norman Rose narrates, assessing Biafra's near-victory and stating that "his next step may be the White House."

More questionably legitimate features of the national landscape include obese superhero Captain Sticky, rat-eating subterranean hobos, dog bordellos, kung fu nunneries, disco Jell-O baths, bloodworm consumption, sky-diving weddings and disembowelment therapy administered by a palsied quadriplegic. (*ZC*)

THIS IS AMERICA PART 3: AMERICA EXPOSED

Dir. Romano Vanderbes / 1990

More stupid Americans committing fictional outrageous acts.

The final installment (thank Christ), released long after the fact. Church grandmas burn Santa effigies, desperate New Yorkers take hobo classes and sorority girls fry eggs on flaming man buttocks. Combat trained urban senior citizens are shown fighting back against mohawked muggers, and a dour, vaguely punk woman is taught how to assassinate someone by electrifying a urinal. (*ZC*)

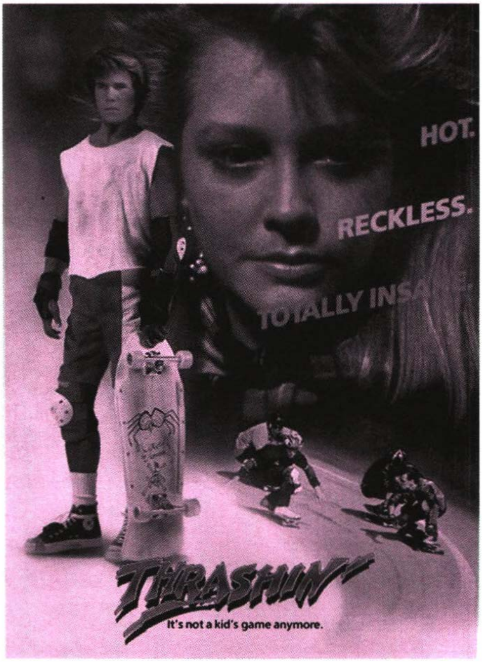
THRASHIN'

Dir. David Winters / 1986

Romeo and Juliet on a wicked half-pipe.

Josh Brolin is Corey, a skateboard-crazed teen tourist who quickly falls for California dreamgirl Chrissy (Pamela Gidley). Unfortunately, her brother Tommy Hook (Robert Rusler of *Nightmare on Elm St.*) is the kingpin of The Daggers, a gang of criminal deckriders who rule Venice Beach with a denim fist. These off-suburban nogoodniks dent cars, berate breakdancers and get severely peeved when Valley pissants like Corey horn in on their ramps and/or siblings. The rivalry is fierce, as Corey is labeled "Val trash" and counters with "punk poseur."

At their mansion-esque squat, The Daggers dogpile to a hardcore mix tape while Chrissy sneaks off for starlit romance with her forbidden heartthrob. Hatred flares, limbs are broken in wheeled combat and Tommy performs some blazing air guitar in preparation



for the film's epic climax: a 20-mile downhill skate race named The LA Massacre. Incredibly, Brolin and the other cast members do much of their own skate and stunt work.

Though The Daggers' arcade burnout fashion rarely qualifies as punk, many of their rampside spectators go well beyond the required wardrobe/haircut damage to fit the bill. Blinding dye jobs, 90-degree angle war paint and quasi-apocalyptic jumpsuits are the common beachfront uniform. Goths, afro-punks and scum metal trolls gawk in harmony as Tommy and his crew perform slow-motion ollies and grinds to well-produced synth rock. Even at a goddamn Red Hot Chili Peppers concert, the entire West Coast technicolor contingent is front-row center.

Alan Sacks co-wrote and produced this project following his infinitely more confrontational punk epic *Du-beat-e-o*, and the film benefits from his history in both comedy and the underground music scene. Rodney Dangerfield's chubby comedy colleague Chuck McCann appears in the unlikely role of "the guy who invented skateboarding," and a club MC is played by Zachary, a revered LA punk fixture and second host to Peter Ivers on the legendary UHF program *New Wave Theatre*. (*ZC*)

ALAN SACKS

Writer/Producer – *THRASHIN'*

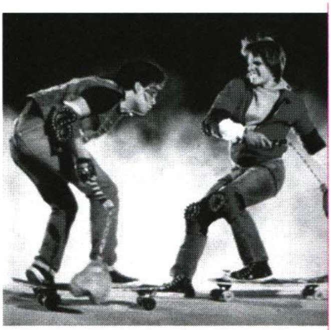
DAM: *Thrashin'* was the polar opposite of your previous film. How did you end up on a skate kid movie?

AS: Well, it was punk. The *LA Weekly* had done a story about me after I made *Du-beat-e-o*. They went into my background, about how I'd done *Welcome Back, Kotter* and then now had made this crazy movie. It was a cool article, and it went into some great detail so it was about half a page. Well, the other half of the page was an article on this group of girls that were calling themselves The Hags, who were female skateboarders. So I looked at this article and I was like, "What the hell is this? There's half a page on girl skateboarders here!" But when I read it, I wanted to know what was going on. Zachary from *New Wave Theatre* knew these girls. I asked him about it, he told me more and I went into the world of skateboarding. The skaters were the stage divers, the Orange County kids. I was from the city, so I was exposed to a new culture that had just started.

I went into it, found the toughest guys in that world like Tony Alva from the Z-Boys, and then I found Stacy Peralta, and so on. I wanted to set a movie in this environment, kind of like Romeo and Juliet. Really, I wanted to do *West Side Story* because it's one of my all-time favorites. So I put together a presentation for the studio that was basically that story but in the world of skateboarding. I did a lot of research, went to a lot of events and sold the idea to a production company who then gave me the money to write the script with a young guy named Paul Brown. This was a different job from my last film. There was money there, and I had to answer to people. I got some bands involved, like the Screamin' Sirens, TSOL, and I got the Circle Jerks to do "Wild in the Streets."

You had this really melodramatic villainous presence coming from The Daggers. Where did those characters come from?

The kids in The Daggers were the real thing. They became an actual skate gang. What's really nuts is that you can go out today and they're still doing it. There are



Daggers tattoos, at skate shows you'll see Daggers patches, you have to be jumped to get in. It's messed up. But I love it and it's something I created. People will ask me, "Can you believe it? You're the godfather of The Daggers." I'd feel better if they gave me some money off the boards they're selling [laughs]. No, I don't care: it's fine. It makes me feel good.

For the part of their leader Hook in the movie, Sherilyn Fenn came up to me and said, "Would you do me a favor and audition my boyfriend? I think he could really be good in this movie." I said yes, she brought in her guy and he was kind of a punk, but almost like a poseur punk. We shook hands and we talked, but I thought his handshake was really wimpy so I didn't cast him...and it was Johnny Depp [laughs]. Oh well!

Some skater kids might have thought *Thrashin'* was cheesy, but they still loved it. There was this tough crew up in San Francisco, The Jaks, that were actually pretty similar to The Daggers, and when the film opened up there, these kids actually rioted. They had to shut the theater down because they went so crazy and had such a good time. Today, there's not a skate kid out there who doesn't know *Thrashin'*.

TIMES SQUARE

Dir. Allan Moyle / 1980

"Spic, nigger, faggot, bum...your daughter is one..."
A streetwise teen girl and a politician's daughter band together, encouraging fellow misunderstood post-pubescent girls to take on parents, authorities and the establishment.

Times Square is said to be the movie that inspired infamous riot girl Kathleen Hannah to jump-start *Revolution Grrrl Style Now* in the early '90s and usher in a fresh recapitulation of punk-based feminism. Set against the backdrop of New York City's downtown "renaissance campaign," it's a case of opposites attract when two young women meet while sharing a room at a psychiatric clinic and quickly form a tight bond. Sheltered Pamela (Trini Alvarado) is dazzled by the inspired, creative insolence that drives Nicky (Robin Johnson), and the two quickly become inseparable in their quest to live life in whatever way they see fit. This kamikaze need to establish their own world sees the girls becoming a sensation as The Sleez Sisters, broadcasting their music and message via a radio program hosted by the sleepy-eyed but equally dissentious Johnny LaGuardia (Tim Curry).

This film, made the year that marked the end of the '70s, uniquely preempts an unfortunate shift to the watered-down teen-focused Hollywood tripe that became standard in the 1980s. *Times Square* maintains its strong '70s cinema sensibility, joining films ripe with radical, controversial and questionable content as compared to the restrictions films were subjected to in the following decade, where more realistic depictions were toned down to be less political or provoking, including queer-related subject matter. The young actresses are afforded substantially mature material in *Times Square*: candid song lyrics regarding racism, poverty and social injustice, and Pam dancing in a topless bar, albeit topped, but still.

There are other moments that stand out as indicative of both a nod to this shift in cinematic content and the development of the female characters; just prior to the girls meeting in the hospital ward, Pam's father references his daughter's desire to see *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. As he explains, he doesn't have an objection to her seeing it, even if it means she has to lie about her age, but it's the fact that the theater is located in Times Square and shares the street with porn shops. His character illustrates an adult obliviousness to the schizo outlook he's enmeshed in while projecting these notions of mental instability onto his daughter. This conflict is never more evident than in the opening scene where we see ads posted along the streets espousing "Reclaim the heart of the city," a message that boldly states to the area's current inhabitants that their hearts may be stamped out in favor of those with more money and power, a prophecy that eventually came to pass.

Writer/director Moyle has said that the story was inspired by a diary he inadvertently purchased that was hidden in a second-hand sofa. It belonged to a mentally-ill girl, and her journal detailed her struggles with the world around her. He became deeply fascinated by the book, and first adapted it as a short story titled "She Got the Shakes." The girl's identity was unknown, but several people sued

TIMES S
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the production company upon *Times Square's* release, stating the story was directly lifted from their lives.

Once the script was finished, the major hurdle was casting. By impossible luck, 15-year-old Robin Johnson was cutting class when she was spotted by a talent scout, and stumbled into the role she was born to play. As Nicky, Johnson is the embodiment of fearless teen rebellion, and the inexperienced actress pulls off countless major feats of dramatic talent throughout the film. Despite the girls' age and lack of training, Moyle was impressed enough with their abilities that he often allowed them to improvise on camera. He also let them handle the Sleez Sisters recordings, the songs credited to Johnson and her co-star on the soundtrack album. David Johansen recorded a song with Robin for the soundtrack called "Flowers in the City." While they were in the studio, he trained her in rock 'n' roll attitude and told her she had the talent to pursue music for a living.

He was right. Her presence in *Times Square* led to a contract with Stigwood and the RSO Company. It was a development deal, and she was told they'd "make her the female John Travolta." She was legally bound and restricted from working with anyone else, thus missing out on several auditions and meetings spurred by attention brought by her work in the film. In the end, RSO did nothing for her, and by the time she was released from her contract, she was essentially unknown again.

Moyle ended up at odds with the producers, most notably Bee Gees manager Robert Stigwood who consistently thwarted the director at every turn. Frustrated, Moyle went rogue and walked off the project. Later, he'd be horrified by Stigwood's re-edited final product and its brazenly ill-fitting disco closing theme featuring The Bee Gees' Barry Gibb. But no villainous production meddlings were damaging enough to dampen the battle cry of the film, which is every bit as effective today as when it was first released. Urban development vs. existing communities, the complexities of teen adolescence, societal issues depicted through interpersonal relationships in addition to a larger picture and coming out. If there's one overall message *Times Square* conveys, it's the true spirit of punk: anti-establishment, self-sustainability, mobility and personal freedom of expression. Although Nicky's desire to be famous would be incongruent to punk sensibilities, she's seeking fame as a sort of shield or protection, a vehicle that will provide her with visibility and with it the insurance that she will never become one of the disappeared. (*BI/LAF*)

TOKYO POP

Dir. Fran Rubel Kuzui / 1988

A young singer, unappreciated by her band and fed up with her womanizing boyfriend, leaves New York for Tokyo to find fame and fortune.

Carrie Hamilton plays Wendy Reed, a bleach-blond singer who decides to go to Tokyo following a soured musical endeavor. She looks a lot like Gwen Stefani, and it seems quite possible that Stefani fashioned herself after this character. Intending a serious pursuit of a musical profession, Reed approaches a series of bands resulting in a great sequence featuring an eclectic variety of musical genres and fashion aesthetics. During one try-out, she's singing with a band of members with fantastic hair, but when they perform a punk rendition of "Home on the Range," it renders the audience comatose.

She eventually encounters some like-minded energetic musicians, a group of young Japanese men who are highly stylized and just as ambitious. They've been looking for someone just like her to front their band: a blond-haired American gimmick. Despite strife between members and an awkward romance between Reed and Hiro (Diamond Yukai), the shtick works. Just as they are on the brink of breaking up, they're catapulted into fame, performing covers of cheesy American songs like "Natural Woman" and "Do You Believe in Magic?" However, in the end, Wendy realizes she will always be the "gaijin," just a superficial freak, so she returns to New York to resume her stateside musical career.

Some of the bands featured here were actual Japanese rock combos of the era, including Papaya Paranoia and X, who later became X Japan for obvious reasons. Still, the new wave flavor is severely watered down. But for what this movie lacks in any genuine punkness, it makes up for with interesting locations, such as the series of "love hotels" Wendy and Hiro frequent, each more outlandish than the next, or the restaurant bearing a huge red crab with moving arms and legs above its door. (*BI*)

TONGS: AN AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

Dir. Philip Chon / 1986

Asian crime goes bananas.

Two brothers from Hong Kong relocate to the U.S., dazzled by the sights of the big city: hobos, goombah racists and wild-styled skate punks. Mickey is studious and trusting, while black sheep sibling Paul dreams of building an empire on drugs and cash. They bunk with their bumbling uncle in the worst section of Chinatown, where young Tong enforcers hold a grip on the streets. Mickey angers members of the vicious Red Eagles gang when he defends a homeless dwarf. After Paul shoots a rival gangster and goes into hiding, Mickey must face the Red Eagles with only the help of his fellow good-natured nerds. (*ZC*)

TOTALLY FUCKED UP

Dir. Gregg Araki / 1993

Dramatic segments from the lives of fictional queer teens.

Six disenfranchised youths share their experiences and opinions with the camera, subjects running from sex to drugs to AIDS. After these topics are covered, the film opens into a strained narrative following Andy (James Duval) and the others through their directionless jaunts. The film's central lesbian couple rumpuses in the bathtub beside a clay sculpture of a mohawked head. Later, the punk rant scene from *Hippy Porn* plays on a dying television. (*ZC*)

TOUGH GUYS

Dir. Jeff Konew / 1986

Golden age bandits Archie (Kirk Douglas) and Harry (Burt Lancaster) are released from prison to face a world gone wrong.

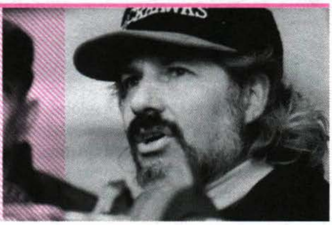
Director Kanew had already dabbled in new wave-infused misfit humor with *Revenge of the Nerds*, but it wasn't until 1986 that he unleashed his unlikely masterpiece. *Tough Guys* is admittedly light on plot, but is a startlingly engaging display of incredible acting and old-fashioned-meets-new-fangled comedy bits. Despite the fact that its opening theme was written by Burt Bacharach and performed by Kenny Rogers, it's the punkest retiree movie ever. In addition, it's the Cop-Hater's Video Bible, kicking off in the first five minutes as Archie (Douglas) flips the bird to one of his former jailers. Our two aged roustabouts proceed to foil a junkie bank robbery, diss Ronald Reagan and nearly get ventilated by an equally elderly 12-gauge-toting assassin played by the great Eli Wallach. Their old watering hole has transformed into a gay bar during their 30-year absence, as evidenced by businessmen doing the tango. Some brawny street thugs blare Janet Jackson from their boombox and hassle our heroes for crossing their alley. After beating the kids senseless, Archie observes, "They don't know shit about streetfighting."

As you may have gathered, Archie is the wild one. His new dishwashing job is at a restaurant that apparently only caters to punks and rock mutants. He wrangles a date with a woman 1/3rd his age and updates his fashion at a new wave clothing store where the clerk is a nigh-robotic transvestite on a video screen. After suiting up in hideous modern attire, he meets his "gorgeous broad" at rock club The Chainsaw, where none other than the Red Hot Chili Peppers are playing to a crowd of slamming maniacs (including Stevo from the original Vandals). Archie busts a major move with his date, but is confused by the rowdy pit and ends up laying out a spiky teenager with one bust to the jawbone. His new girlfriend's futuristic apartment has neon lights and Grace Jones posters on every wall. He mumbles the lyrics to a Chili Peppers song as they head straight to the bedroom. Though it was filmed when he was 70 years old, this movie does more to inflate Douglas' masculine ego than the rest of his career combined. Later, his sweetheart puts on a blue wig and matching geometric dress, prompting one of the film's many genuinely tender moments.

There are too many memorable sequences to include in one review, but *Tough Guys* is absolutely packed with superstar entertainment. A bird shits on a patrolman. Dwarf superstar Billy Barty shows up in a raging cameo as an enthusiastic former criminal crony. Douglas flips off a SWAT team and moons a police copter (without using a stunt ass). Lancaster throws spinach soufflé on a bodybuilder's crotch. Douglas is hired at a Penguin's Frozen Yogurt and lasts five minutes before assaulting a 10-year-old. In the film's fourth homophobic scene, a police sergeant calls them "fags" and gets knocked out cold. This was the actors' seventh feature together, and though the humor admittedly aims lower than the rest of their work, it's inspiring to see them in such impressive stride after half a century in the industry. (*ZC*)

JEFF KANEW

Director – *TOUGH GUYS*



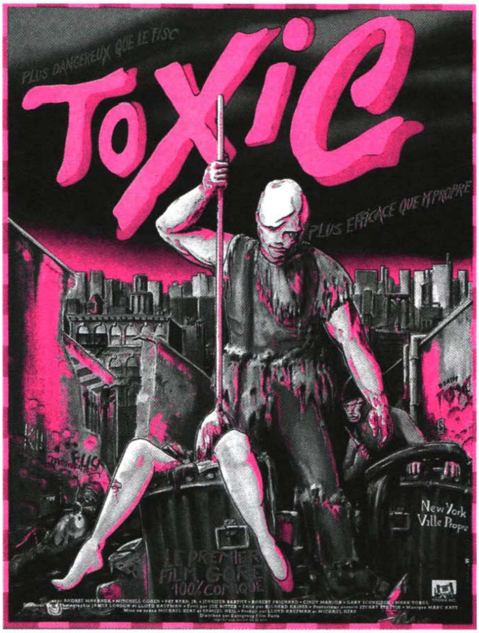
JK: The idea was here are these guys that have been locked up for 30 years. When they went away, Glenn Miller was the music of the day. So it was all about how uncomfortable they would be in the modern world. Though both Kirk Douglas and his Archie character are a lot cooler and more adaptable than you'd think. He goes to a gym, meets a young girl who's part of this music scene and ends up at this club where people are dancing. Guys start slamming into him, and being a feisty guy, he goes from being offended to really digging it. Casting the location, I went to shows at The Anti Club and saw this stuff. The kids in the scene were certainly made up and costumed in accordance with what we needed, but the casting agent we used was able to find some authentic ones. Kirk loved it. He thought it was fun. I bet that if I'd have taken him to some real punk shows then, he would have had a great time.

I never had an interest in punk music... I'm more interested in the doo-wop era, which really isn't represented in my films. But I guess I directed three movies in a row that had something punk or new wave in them, so maybe I'm just a secret punk and I don't know it. I certainly have a problem with authority [laughs].

THE TOXIC AVENGER

Dirs. Michael Herz & Lloyd Kaufman / 1984

A gory superhero vengeance comedy like no other.


TOXIC
PLUS DANGEREUX QUE LE FISC
PLUS EFFICACE QUE M.PROPRE
New York Ville Propre
LE PREMIER FILM GORE 100% COMIQUE

Despite where Troma is now (in the Hot Topic toilet scoping for babes), this is a damn good movie. It's over the top and full of truly shocking, assaultive moments. Example number one: the scene where a car full of wacked-out teenagers slams full speed into a child on his bike, crushing his skull into a gooey splat. It's upsetting, absurd and funny all at once, and that's a tough concoction to pull off. Things reach a crazed pinnacle with a restaurant robbery that features martial arts, animal homicide and death by milkshake. With its grotesque zaniness, one would think that there would be countless punks in this film, but the pickins is slim. Beyond characters with metal bracelets and painted faces, there's only one bona fide spazzoid punk in the form of a man with blue/red hair, who confronts Toxie in an alley and is quickly killed.

This film would prove to be Troma's most notorious hit. Unfortunately, financial success and gore comedy are poor bedfellows, and Troma's merit deteriorated heavily as they bought into their own hype, championing offensiveness over quality until the company became a belching, oozing bedsore on cinema's rear end. (*BC*)

THE TOXIC AVENGER PART 2

Dirs. Michael Herz & Lloyd Kaufman / 1989

The continuing adventures of the mutated janitor superhero as he fights evil corporation Apocalypse Inc, set on taking over Tromaville.

More ridiculous and comical than the first installment...and less interesting. Dancing headless corpses + a midget getting slam-dunked = a strained, self-aware brand of humor. Where the original was hilariously shocking at times, this one comes off as too wacky, a trend that Troma sadly decided to maintain in all their films since. The sequel was originally nearly three hours long! Rather than edit down to the quality bits, Kaufman divided up the footage into two separate films. Instead of a tighter, better film, they ended up with two choppy messes (see *Part 3*...wait...don't). The overall punk presence has been upped here, if only slightly. A frizzy-haired woman with a dog collar and a tattoo on her cheek stands with a handful of other semi-punk folk among a crowd of Apocalypse Inc. villains. A Japanese man with a septum ring, chains and a cowskin shirt forcibly makes out with a woman on the streets of Tokyo. Once the evil corporation takes control, a dude in a mohawk can be spotted hassling the good people of Tromaville. If you aren't impressed by this movie, don't move forward to anything else Troma released after 1989. (*BC*)

THE TOXIC AVENGER PART 3: THE LAST TEMPTATION OF TOXIE

Dirs. Michael Herz & Lloyd Kaufman / 1989

More of the same...only less.

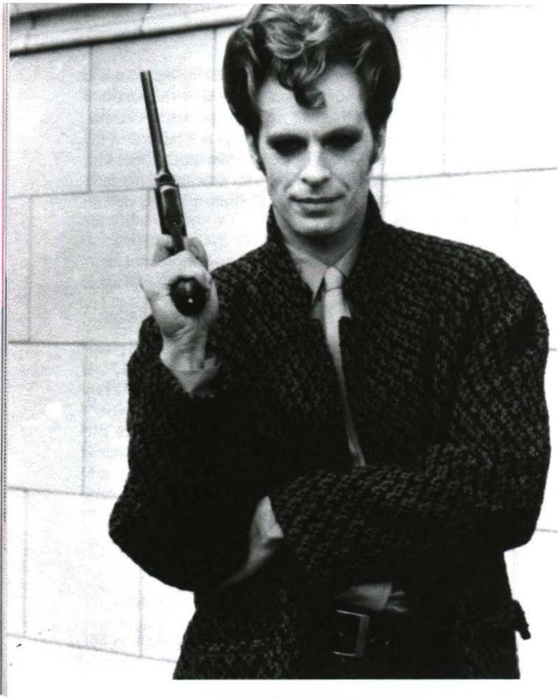
Assembled from footage left over from the second movie, the film opens with a group of punks trying to wreak havoc in a video store. One has a blue beard, blue pigtails and a giant safety pin across his chest. This scene is noteworthy for a brutal VCR-themed death. But soon after, the movie takes a turn for the boring. If you choose to sit through the next 88 excruciating minutes, notice the mohawked man in the background of the demon transformation sequence towards the end. It feels as if all of this was quickly thrown together by a wino with Scotch tape. Not anywhere near the real fun of the original or even the half-hearted fun of the second one. Strangely, two years later, Fox kicked off a cartoon series based on these family-unfriendly movies. Even stranger is the fact that someone could manage to turn a motion picture about a mutated janitor who fights Satan into a big old snooze factory. (*BC*)

TRAINSPOTTING

Dir. Danny Boyle / 1996

Funny accents 'n' scabby arms.

A group of junkies do their best to maintain their lives as much as each daily fix will allow. When they have an opportunity to change their lives through a promising drug deal, the joint business venture only erupts in betrayal, deception and violence. Rotted teeth, flying



TROUBLE IN MIND

Dir. Alan Rudolph / 1985

Koop (Keith Carradine) descends into a life of crime,
while ex-cop Hank (Kris Kristofferson) secretly seduces
his wife. Not-so-wacky antics ensue.

Another typical shrug from the Rudolph oeuvre. The film's only saving grace is the well-utilized backdrop of dreary Seattle, here called Rain City. This is one of those '80s-spawned future worlds where men wear old-timey suits and ties. Why didn't anyone envision the actual future where men wear sweatpants and "Who Farted" hats? Carradine is semi-capable as a human being here. He gets a crazy pomp that ends with a Curly-Q shape hanging down over his brow. An Asian man shows up with a sloppy mohawk. Kris Kristofferson has his usual neatly-trimmed beard and good God, what a handsome man. Ladies, forget about Tom Selleck; here's the REAL dreamboat. You have to agree that he's vastly more attractive than any other man, woman or animal in this film, especially the grunting guy with an eyepatch. Early on, he walks by two punks at a parade. At one point, he has one of those terrible force-yourself-on-the-lady-and-she'll-eventually-like-it scenes. Just a little something he picked up from working on Sam Peckinpah films. The best surprise here is drag legend Divine as a rough hood. S/he shows off acting talents that could have led to a whole career playing toughies like this, but sadly died a few years after this project was completed. *(BC)*

TRUE STORIES

Dir. David Byrne / 1986

Mr. Byrne wears various Western shirts and takes us on
a quiet tour through fictional Virgil, Texas, where the
townsfolk are preparing for their big talent show.

All the songs are from the Talking Heads album of the same name, but here are sung by the cast. John Goodman is warm and wonderful as a lonely singer/songwriter looking for love. Watch when he sings to his date, forgets the words to the song and just meows the missing part. People take turns lip synching to the track "Wild Wild Life," one of which is Heads guitarist Jerry Harrison dressed up as Billy Idol. Co-written by the man who played the villain in *Garfield: The Movie*, Mr. Stephen Tobolowsky. There are lots of political statements in this film about corporate America and such, but done with enough good subtle humor that it never seems obnoxious. Also features an enjoyable performance from the late genius Spalding Gray. *(BC)*

TRUST

Dir. Hal Hartley / 1990

Dull, listless people complicate each others' lives.

In keeping with his entire body of work, standards-lowerer Hal Hartley's second feature consists of forced dialogue being recited in monotone by talentless white people. A pregnant teen (Adrienne Shelly) befriends a sociopath (Martin Donovan) who carries a live grenade at all times, "just in case." Both are spawned from miserable families, and find common ground in their hatred of everyone but each other. Their flatlined adventures lead them across baby-stealing housewives, predatory convenience store clerks, drunken abortionists and other underdeveloped, nauseatingly quirky characters. Shockingly, the least caricaturized participant is a black-clad '77-style punk who whizzes by carrying a busted TV.

Every actor on screen seems to have been paid in Xanax, and the script has less humor and sincerity than a novelty birthday card. But Hartley established himself as a major force in independent cinema despite his movies. An often-imitated darling of the art-school freshman elite, the New York director simply bridged the '90s cultural chasm between Cat-in-the-Hat hats and iPods, providing Caucasian youths with something to discuss at the hookah bar after yoga class. *(ZC)*

TRUTH OR DARE? – A CRITICAL MADNESS

Dir. Tim Ritter / 1986

An already unbalanced man becomes obsessed
with vengeance and mutilation.

One of the better-known entries in the mid-'80s homemade video sleaze market, Ritter's brain-damaged slasher opus spawned two sequels and a huge amount of attention from no-rent gore enthusiasts. John Brace plays Mike, a whitebread businessman with a history of mental illness, who is cuckolded by his wife and embarks on a slooowww-motion descent into homicidal insanity. After a great deal of self-carving, he graduates to taking out his aggressions on others. Locked away in an asylum, he forces the other inmates to play Truth or Dare. One patient ends up sawing off his own hand while another (played by a wispily mohawked Asbestos Felt, star of Ritter's following film *Killing Spree*) sucks on a live grenade until his head explodes. After Mike further deforms himself with a knife, he breaks free of the institute. He faces off against a trio of white-trash losers, one of whom is the most low-class welfare slob punk ever caught on video. Our hero is clearly unimpressed by such bold individuality, and leaves a smoldering fat corpse in his wake. Mike also squares off with a Hawaiian shirt-clad policeman. And a baby.

Ritter was only 18 years old when the film was completed with a budget of $200,000, a total which actually shows well in some major automotive destruction moments. The pyrotechnic effects supervisor had overseen similar effects for *Ghostbusters*, but that's where the Hollywood links to Ritter's canon end. According to the shock filmmaker, the producers took the raw footage and fired him in an attempt to commandeer what would later become a pretty major VHS success. *Truth or Dare* was shot entirely in Palm Beach, FL and features a closing theme that's physically painful to listen to. Followed by *Wicked Games* and *Screaming for Sanity* before Ritter found salvation (kinda) and helmed the head-scratching Christian splatter epic *Reconciled through the Christ*. (*ZC*)

TUFF TURF

Dir Fritz Kiersch / 1985

The new kid in town starts a feud with the local hoodlums, which only escalates when he falls for the gang leader's girl.

Morgan (James Spader) really has it rough. Bullies run over his bike, hang a dead rat in his locker and give him a ruthless beatdown in the locker room. His pal Jimmy (Robert Downey Jr.) "drums" in a band afterschool with Mr. Jim Carroll on vocals. Jimmy seems to be wearing lipstick in some scenes, and during a show he wears chains and handcuffs on his tight pants, which catch on part of the drum kit, knocking it over. People good at *Where's Waldo* will spy the man in the red mohawk in the far background of the scene where Downey explains to Spader how to get to a club. The viewer will initially be confused as to why so many gay men are hanging around the club listening to Jim Carroll croon, but the reason becomes clear when the whole place breaks into choreographed dance. This will be the first of many high-concept musical numbers. Odd, considering this is a semi-serious and extremely well-done film about juvenile delinquents. Sadly, the song Spader sings (in his actual voice) at a country club is not on the film's soundtrack. It includes the lyrics: "We lick our wounds till light rips through the niiight..." Also featured are Jack Mack and the Heart Attack; a band that looks like dads trying to cash in on Huey Lewis and the News. Mr. Mack himself is basically Al from *Home Improvement* impersonating James Brown. They show up a little later, as if the filmmakers spent their entire music budget on Jim Carroll and had to settle with some county fair rock band for the duration. (*BC*)

CHARLES PINION

Director – *TWISTED ISSUES*

CP: My dad, a military man, bought an RCA camcorder at the base exchange. Within a short time he lent it to me. I started documenting the various bands in the Gainesville scene. This was like '86 or '87. This was before everyone owned a camcorder. I felt Gainesville had an essential, unique music scene, and I wanted to capture it.

Anyway, I got to thinking about making a movie. I started talking to people about wanting to make a movie. There were many skeptics but I gravitated toward those who were interested in making it happen. A skateboarder, Andrew Entner, suggested the idea of the Jason-like skate zombie. It could be said the whole movie was born from that image! I said to anyone who was interested, "Create a character, with a purpose and a story, and it will be in the movie."

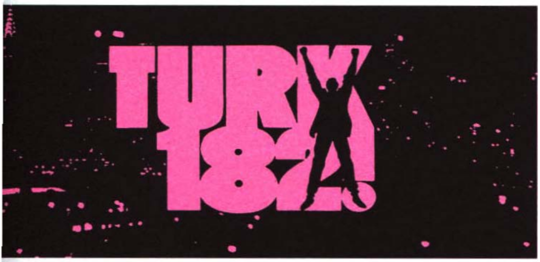
Basically the characters in *Twisted Issues* do their thing against a backdrop of various bands, gigs, house parties and such, which I had been shooting in Gainesville for the previous several months. I enlisted friends, band members, and even rivals to be in this film. I was at that point thinking seriously about leaving Gainesville and moving to New York, so *Twisted Issues* was my parting love-letter—mixed feelings and all—toward the place I'd lived for several years.

DAM: Where was it distributed and screened, and how was it received by individual viewers and audiences?

In the spring of 1988, *Twisted Issues* premiered on the University of Florida campus. The response was insane. They had a nice big sports bar projection screen, which was perfect. The sound was LOUD. I guess you could call the crowd response "shooting fish in a barrel." There were like 20 local bands on the soundtrack, and of course all the actors were local. There were big laughs and screams, particularly in reaction to things like Sam getting his eye gouged out by the skate zombie.

It was after I'd moved to NYC that I got surprisingly positive responses outside the Gainesville audience. Part of it may have been due to my packaging, which included a little zine with drawings and band info and a 90-minute soundtrack cassette. All for like $15 postpaid, in a Ziploc bag. I was able to hit a horror market because of the gore, and a punk market because of the music. *Film Threat* feted it, calling it "One of the 25 Underground Films You MUST See!" I still get an occasional letter where someone says they were inspired to make movies because of seeing *Twisted Issues.*

For more on Charles Pinion and his current projects, visit www.charlespinion.com.



TURK 182

Dir. Bob Clark / 1985

New York City learns the power of kindheartedness from a doofwad with a spray can.

Jimmy (Timothy Hutton) is a fun lovin' ne'er-do-well watched over by his firefightin' big brother Terry (Robert Urich). A trash-talking bartender tells Terry that he'd "better look out...one of these days your kid brother is gonna show up with a safety pin in his ear and his hair dyed green." After a terrible accident, Jimmy is forced to be the provider for Terry who is in a full-body cast. When no one will help, Jimmy heads directly to the mayor (Robert Culp), who denies the boys any assistance. Jimmy then turns to large-scale graffiti, scrawling "TURK 182" across every surface in the city to shame the mayor in his clean-up campaign. In doing so, Jimmy becomes a hero to the people, including a couple punks on the subway, one of whom sports the very same green hair and functional jewelry portentously referred to by the bartender in the film's opening. *(ZC)*

TWISTED ISSUES

Dir. Charles Pinion / 1988

Science and magic lead to supernatural punk retribution.

Gainesville, FL has long been the punk epicenter of the Sunshine State, and this aggressively budget-free shot-on-video splatter fantasy immediately sets its sights on GV's rich skatethrash scene. A handful of unemployed teens tool around for house shows and weed, blasting grindcore cassettes and doing all they can to stay aimless. Likeable straight-edger Paul is harassed by a gaggle of shitbag cruisers who then deliberately run him down and flee the scene. His corpse is reanimated by a mad scientist who's clearly not old enough to buy cigarettes. With his first breath, Paul screams, "SKATEBOOOOAAARD!," drills his left foot to his board's deck, dons a fencing mask and heads out for vengeance. The gore is relentless and ties in with other plots involving roadkill photography and an all-powerful junior occultist in a Die Kreuzen T-shirt. Things take a decidedly psychedelic turn by the end, but homemade viscera and general creative drive triumph in a brutal intestine-war finale.

Music by various Gainesville scene bands including Hellwitch, Mutley Chix, Yucky Spit, Slaves of Christ and Psychic Violents, a band fronted by writer/director Pinion. He turns in the film's best performance as a dimension-hopping mastermind, and would later move to New York to more seriously pursue his filmmaking goals. *(ZC)*

TWO IDIOTS IN HOLLYWOOD

Dir. Stephen Tobolowsky / 1988

The title says it all.

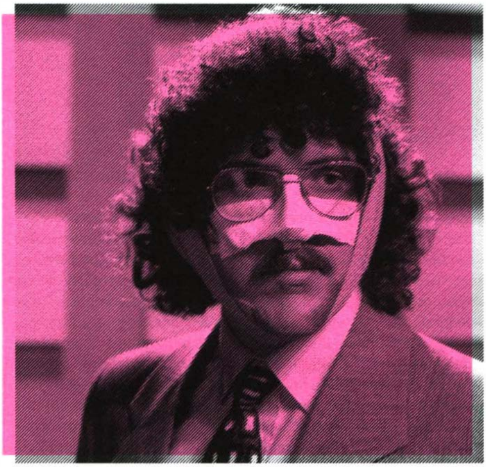
Every few years, film critics put together lists of the Best Films Ever Made. These usually cover obvious Hollywood classics like *Gone with the Wind*, *The Godfather*, etc. and possibly a few independent films like *Killer of Sheep*, *Faces* or *Scorpio Rising*. This film will never be anywhere near any list. But it should. Few comedies reach the heights of hilarity of this goddamn masterpiece. I would go so far as to say it's up there with *The Producers* as one of the great movie satires.

Director Tobolowsky (better known as the annoying insurance salesman in *Groundhog Day*) took his stage play and turned it into a more artful version of a Zucker Brothers-style film. One of the titular idiots works on *Pac Man: The Movie*. The other idiot thinks he can go far with his terrible impersonation of the wolfman. These two brilliant overactors sing a song while sticking their heads through holes in a wall. A cavalcade of dancers shimmy to the tune, one of them a punk girl with messy multicolored hair who boogies next to a giant black man in a Speedo. The Mentors' El Duce has a role as one of many hairy men inhabiting an all-nude prison. Purposefully bad jokes, crude sexual humor, snappy dialogue, surreal tangents and the inclusion of the actors' many mistakes make this feel like you've died and gone to Silly Heaven. *(BC)*

UHF

Dir. Jay Levey / 1989

"Weird Al" Yankovic takes control of a local TV station and his off-the-wall programming makes it the biggest thing in town, much to the chagrin of an evil TV network magnate (Kevin McCarthy).



Al's only effort as a true film star and the outcome is hands-down one of the best damn comedies of all time. Whether you're five or 85, you'll quote this movie until the day you die. Yankovic got a raw deal when this film came out in the summer of '89, going up against *Batman* and the third *Indiana Jones* installment and failing miserably. The most amusing parts of the film are definitely the TV show parodies. Who wouldn't love *Wheel of Fish, Conan the Librarian* and *Stay Fit with Spike and Mike*? The latter features two punks slamming heads, one with a red mohawk and the other with styled hair. Michael Richards is beyond brilliant as janitor-turned-TV star Stanley Spadowski, and his performance showcases the talents that were to be unleashed to the entire world a year later with *Seinfeld*. He asks his child audience, "Who wants to drink from the fire hose?" He then turns a hose on full blast into a kid's face, knocking him across the room. John Paragon (director of *Twin Sitters* starring the Barbarian Brothers, and also Pee-wee's pal Jambi) is McCarthy's kiss-ass son. This is the only film to ally nasal actresses Victoria Jackson and Fran Drescher. Billy Barty and the third man to play Bozo the Clown round out the cast. (BC)

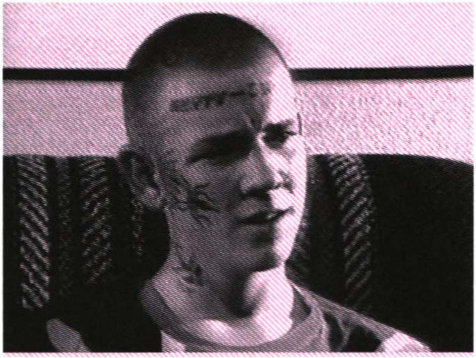
UK/DK: A FILM ABOUT PUNKS AND SKINHEADS

Dirs. Christopher Collins & Ken Lawrence / 1979

England's early punk scene is laid bare, warts and all.

Wayward youths are interviewed between performances by Vice Squad, The Adicts, The Damned, Blitz, The Business, Varukers, Chaos UK, Disorder and of course The Exploited, who kick off the film with their immortal "Fuck the USA." The legendary shit-disturbers complain that they were deemed fascists simply because they wore swastika armbands. Vice Squad's Beki Bondage is more eloquent, and their live segment features studded leather adolescents piled high, slamming into the stage and each other in a frenzy of sweat. The Adicts perform their Adam and the Ants-style number "Joker in the Pack" with lead singer Keith "Monkey" Warren in his ever-present harlequin droog get-up. For the most part, the live performances feature studio audio recordings set over claustrophobic club gigs. The Damned are shown in the studio, where Captain Sensible pulls off a shredding guitar solo while naked inside a plastic bubble. Blitz provides an actual music video for their track "New Age." Disorder is met by interviewer Chris Salewicz in their Bristol flat. Lead singer Boobs explains his recent arrest for theft and his subsequent half-assed suicide attempt, and how it all led up to his involvement with the band. Their performance is the most spirited in the film, and the most poorly attended.

The documentary was produced when the validity and endurance of the initial punk movement was under scrutiny, and many interviews include defensive statements regarding the success and longevity of the scene. More time is spent discussing the counterculture's haircuts than the movement itself. The Business discusses the crucial spirit of togetherness they hope to inspire with their music, just before their live footage shows an audience engaged in an uncontrolled, non-stop brawl. The subject of glue-sniffing is seriously addressed. An 18-year-old skinhead gives an interview, his hands, scalp and face already covered in homemade tattoos, including "NUTTY-SKIN" across his forehead.



Though not necessarily as powerful as other documentaries of its type, *UK/DK* is an important representation of England's founding punks. It's difficult to say if it's inspiring or depressing that nearly all of these bands are still performing together 30 years later. (ZC)

UNDER THE BOARDWALK

Dir. Fritz Kiersch / 1989

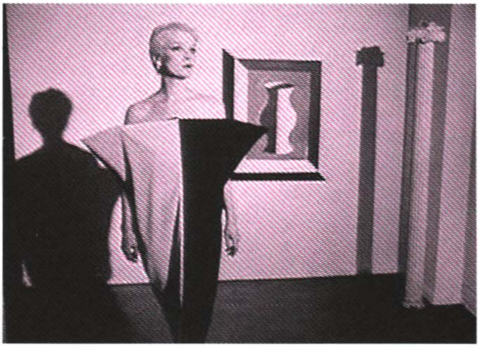
When a coastal loc falls for a pure-hearted, wave-riding val, several nobs are bummed.

The Romeo & Juliet formula modernized via 600+ utterings of the word "brah." Puberty-stricken uptight dweeb Andy (Keith Coogan of *Hiding Out*) is forced into the company of his hunky, no-good surfer cousin. En route to a pre-competition beach bash, Andy encounters the local enclave of thrashing, raging, animalistic sandpunks. This blood-boiling pack of mansters daringly flaunt their heavily-leathered crust ensembles, a courageous contrast to the bikinis and Hawaiian shirts of their party peers. Their disdain for The Rules is brazenly displayed by a particularly spiked maniac thrusting a "NO FIRES ON THE BEACH" sign into a burning trashcan. It doesn't end there; the punks infest several festive celebrations and outdoor scenes in what was likely an attempt to pump up an otherwise tepid summer comedy. They even give a lapdog a pink mohawk and green-dyed legs. Other questionably credible moments include a Surf Punks performance of Don Ho's "Tiny Bubbles" and Andy getting casual in an Agent Orange blouse. Even appearances from *Repo Man's* Tracey Walter and the immortal Dick Miller can't anchor this confused, careening teen distraction from the director of the far superior *Tuff Turf*. (*ZC*)

UNDERGROUND USA

Dir. Eric Mitchell / 1980

A male-for-hire accidentally invades New York's upper crust.



Director Mitchell plays Victor, an immigrant street hustler who's selected from a curbside lineup of leather boys and slick club types for a night on the town. He ends up in the company of innocently self-destructive actress Vickie (Patti Astor), who's the star of Manhattan's rumor mill due to her not-so-casual drug use and incessant dating. Victor is on her arm at a gallery party where socialites and high-art new wave sneerers condemn her in loud whispers. Vickie's only true friend is her bitchy, paranoid roommate Kenneth (Rene Ricard), who begrudgingly lends Victor overpriced outfits and babies the delusional actress as she slips away from reality. Cookie Mueller and John Lurie also appear. Released by New Cinema, a company that borrowed the nickname from the Colab-related No Wave filmmaking movement that defined New York's independent movie scene at that time, and an artistic chapter that Eric Mitchell was synonymous with as both an actor and auteur. (*ZC*)

ERIC MITCHELL

Director – KIDNAPPED; UNDERGROUND USA;
"Victor" – UNDERGROUND USA; "Max Menace" – THE FOREIGNER

EM: I came into the scene through Amos Poe. I was acting in his movies, and also going to acting school at the Lee Strasberg Institute. After I was in *Unmade Beds* and *The Foreigner*, I felt like I could make my own movie.

DAM: Did you already know the people that were involved?

No, I came to New York in '75, so it was near the end of the original CBGB's days. You could still see Patti Smith and Richard Hell and the Ramones there, but things had started to change in '76.

What was it like shooting *The Foreigner*? I've heard that you all didn't sleep for a week.

It wasn't that strenuous. I've since learned that low-budget movies are actually the most relaxed to make.

But you actually got cut up filming that scene in the bathroom.

Oh, yes, that's true. There was that fight with The Cramps in the basement of CBGB's. It was just normal knifeplay, I suppose. If someone's going to poke you with a knife, there's not much that can happen. Unless they start slashing.

After *The Foreigner*, you started working on your own films?

I made *Kidnapped* in '78, and then a lot of people started making their own movies, and those people would act in other people's movies, and there was a whole scene. Then we started The New Cinema. We thought it would be good to have a venue to show our work outside of the standard venue, which was the Anthology Film Archive, because they had decided that independent filmmaking had ended in '72 or something like that. So we couldn't show a movie with him.

We opened the cinema in an old German social club. The owner didn't make us sign a lease; it was just $150 a month. I approached Michael Zilkha from Ze Records to help, who was a producer for James Chance and people like that, and said, "We're going to show Super 8 on video so we don't have to make prints." In many ways this was the first video cinema in the United States. We got this big, crappy screen and it was probably all distorted, but we had showings four nights a week. But some movies did well enough where they would play for three weeks.

When you were shooting *Kidnapped*, did you have a strong idea for what you wanted the movie to be?

Yes, *Kidnapped* is all scripted. It was a joke on underground movies, a joke on terrorism, several levels of jokes. Basically, it was just these people in an apartment bitching at each other, talking about their sexual relationships, political outlook, philosophy, blah blah blah. It's all supposed to be building up to this tension, and in the end, the man is kidnapped and killed; it's all based on this movie *Vinyl* by Warhol a single-shot movie. So we all started at like 2:00 in the afternoon and it was done by 10:00.

The idea was that I wanted everything to be done live so there'd be no post-production. The music comes in live, from the record player or the radio. We'd just turn on a crappy little record player. The reel would run out and we'd start a new one.

You seem like you're having a great time in the film.

I was in the movie, and directing it and running the music, the whole thing. I tried to not show that I'm directing. That's one of the reasons I taped the script to the wall, so people would know it wasn't improvised. It's kind of a post-modern, French way to do it, you know?

[Laughs.] When you had acted in other films, like *The Foreigner*, you had to play as more grim and morose. But that wasn't the case in your own work. Is that true?

That was part of the reason I made my own movies.

You said that you were making fun of the scene a bit with *Kidnapped*, but *Underground USA* takes some pretty hard knocks against that community too, and the way people treat each other.

Well, it was like a ricochet, a bounced comment on the Warhol scene and the No Wave scene. We thought we were the coolest people in the world, and we took it upon ourselves to behave the way we thought Nico or whoever would. There was a lot of drug use. People sort of thought they'd "made it," and then it all went downhill pretty fast. So it was like *Sunset Boulevard* revisited by Warhol's *Heat*. The main character is a doomed superstar from the '60s and she's now in the '70s.

What other projects are you working on?

Oh, I worked on something five years ago and it's still not finished. I wanted to make a desert movie...but I sort of gave it up for a while, to be honest. The movie business is very boring to me, actually. In those days, you just get 5000 bucks and you make a movie and then you're done. But you start to go up into the millions and it's a fucking drag. The whole independent scene, after *Stranger Than Paradise*, it just became complete crap. It became movies about people in their 20s having problems. There were a few exceptions, but that was the main focus. I could never do that.

That's still what they're all about.

I know: that's why I don't go see them. There are so many stories to tell. I suppose they just look at it from the perspective of marketing: they figure that if they're going to put $2,000,000 into something, it's got to have some young people and take place in Seattle and they're going to be having relationship problems...it just doesn't have any edge. It'd be funny to do a festival of all these movies made from '85 to now, just so you could see how similar they all are.

Yeah, but it'd kill you to actually watch them.

Right. I don't want to see them, but it could be a throwing rotten tomatoes-type of thing. Anyway, cinema became really *bad*. I'm not saying that our movies were *good*, but people in New York at that time had an uncompromising idea of the movies they wanted to make and they just did it. They had flaws; the acting or cinematography might not be really good, but they were original. There was always very little money, and that made them homemade, which was the punkest thing about these films. I don't consider them to be punk in that they're talking about music, or the characters are living the lifestyle, but just that these movies were made at all.

THE UNDERNEATH

Dir. Steven Soderbergh / 1995

Michael (Peter Gallagher) attends his mom's wedding and gets wrapped up in a bank heist.

A superbly crafted telling of the Don Tracy novel *Criss Cross*. Many scenes were shot at famed Austin, TX punk venue Emo's. In the first club scene, in the fuzzy background, we vaguely see a goateed fella with a mohawk enjoying a beer. Local ska-punk band Gal's Panic is seen performing a tune. Also shown is Herman the German & Das Cowboy, a crazy surf country polka (?!) group where the main dude wears one of those pointed WWI helmets. (*BC*)

UP IN SMOKE

Dirs. Lou Adler & Tommy Chong / 1978

Cheech & Chong, the Abbott & Costello of relentless drug use, float through the thinnest of premises to deliver enough high-quality gags and comedic situations to comprise one of the funniest movies ever.

Both crude and clever, this film (along with *Animal House*, which was released the same year) started a new genre of slob comedy that would dominate the '80s and beyond. "Who's on First?" isn't funny to the jaded post-Vietnam audience, but smoking dog shit is. The two main characters would be despicable in reality, but what these types of movies do is make you hate other people (the wealthy, the cops) so much more that you can't help but eventually root for the farters.

At the film's climax, Cheech and Chong's music group Alice Bowie makes it into The Roxy's Battle of the Bands. Chong is worried about their lack of practice. Cheech responds, "...It's just punk rock man. You know, you don't even have to know how to play. All you just got to do is to be punk." The other LA punk bands in competition include The Dils, who perform "You're Not Blank," Berlin Brats (led by Rick Wilder of The Mau-Mau's) who perform "Psychotic," and The Whores. The Germs auditioned for the film with their track "Sex Boy," but didn't make it in because they started a food fight. This actual performance can be heard as the B-side to their first single "Forming." Outside the club are posters advertising such bands as Loogey Clap and Punk Nation. The contest's theme song sums it up:

"A new age is on the rise
With safety pins stuck in their eyes
The time has come, let's get it down
Let's find the weirdest band in town."

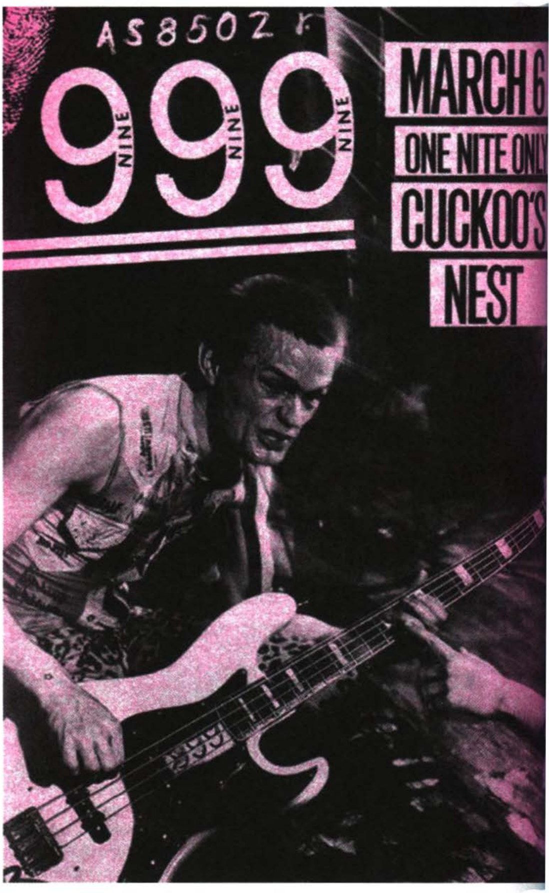
Alice Bowie plays "Earache my Eye." The song is more Black Sabbath than punk, but Cheech wears a pink tutu and Mickey Mouse ears. In the song he brags that he only knows three chords. Punks are visible in and out of The Roxy, walking around, sitting, bored, etc. Later, everyone gets wild when a truck made of marijuana is set aflame and the weed smoke wafts into the club. The non-punk ultimate in this film is watching Stacy Keach's inept narcotics detective character pig out on food to the max at the pot-crazy finale. Director Adler followed this with the more sincere punk masterpiece *Ladies and Gentlemen...the Fabulous Stains*. (*BC*)

URBAN STRUGGLE: THE BATTLE OF THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Dir. Paul Young / 1983

The true story of a rock club's war against society.

Jerry Roach, owner of legendary Costa Mesa, CA punk venue The Cuckoo's Nest, swigs a beer and challenges local authorities to stamp out the punk movement. He acknowledges that there are no punk clubs left in the city, but strongly believes that the movement itself is far too powerful to die. The evidence is strong; a shorn Rollins fronts Black Flag for a hungry crowd who stomp along to "Six Pack." Flag bassist Chuck Dukowski and Casey Royer (The



Adolescents; D.I.) talk about what led to the birth of the Huntington Beach scene, Royer citing a Detroit-New York-UK-LA lineage. The filmmaker asks a local, "Why did you become a punk rocker?" Her answer is heard in many great films of this type: "I didn't like being like everyone else." Derf Scratch of Fear says, "Our main premise is to get people to hate us." It's unclear whether he's referring to the band or punks at large, but either way, he can claim success.

The focus of the documentary always returns to The Cuckoo's Nest itself, the eternally struggling punk haven under constant siege from concerned parents and aggressive officials. The nightspot was said to be the birthplace of slamdancing, and newspaper headlines on a punk dance ban are shown, another development that left Roach frustrated but undeterred. Also, an unexpected enemy arose in the form of neighboring cowboy bar Zubie's, its patrons evidently prone to stopping by The Nest for a post-beer fistfight. This conflict and an accident involving a local punk named Pat Brown were the inspirations for the Vandals track "Urban Struggle." The song plays while the story is recalled: two policemen were nearly run over when they surprised Brown in his car. No lives were lost, but the event was another step towards the club's inevitable end. Roach says he knew he had to close up shop the night he had 90 paid admissions...and the cops made 90 arrests.

Short and modestly made, *Urban Struggle* is an effectively agitating story, produced by Roach himself and shot entirely at The Cuckoo's Nest in '81. Incredible handheld footage of Circle Jerks, TSOL and others is included, and a photomontage from punk's great visual historian Glen E. Friedman closes the film.

The reasonable but extremely pissed off voice of Roach anchors the film with several intelligent and entertaining insights: "The hippies didn't really believe in love that much and the punks don't really believe in hate that much." (*ZC*)

URGH! A MUSIC WAR

Dir. Derek Burbidge / 1980

Quite possibly the greatest concert movie of all time.

The new wave-music outbreak is examined via an avalanche of concert footage. Rather than attempt a selected overview, we'll pay the participating bands the respect of covering each individual performance.

I hope you're sitting down...

The Police open the movie with "Driven to Tears." Yawn.

Wall of Voodoo - "Back in Flesh" - It's a great song, the crowd is electric and Stan Ridgway is a genuine weirdo.

Toyah Willcox - "Danced" - She's the hyperactive lady from the movie *Jubilee*. Here, she does aerobics.

John Cooper Clarke - "Health Fanatic" - This guy predates all the poetry slam shit. His spoken word/acapella rap about the health craze is brilliant and so is his hair.

Orchestral Manoeuvres - "Enola Gay" - This performance is prior to the release of their first album and before they added "in the Dark" to their name. Great early dance music.

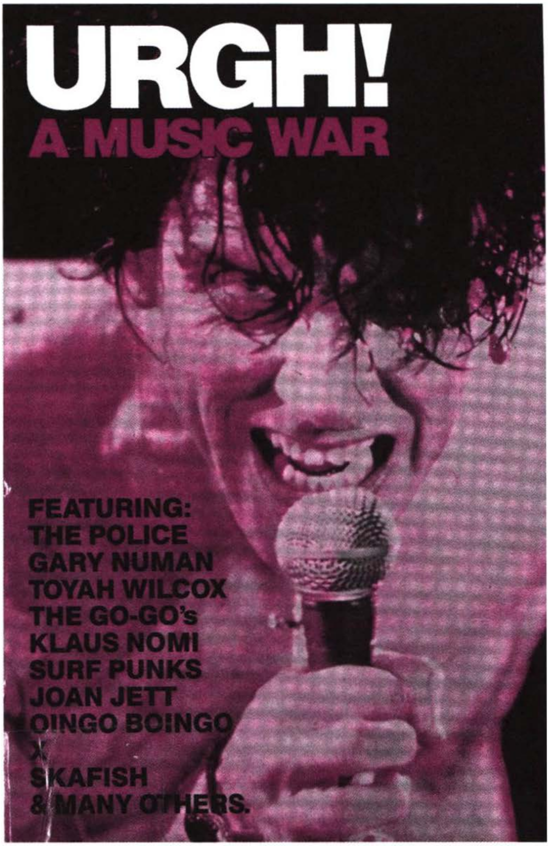
Chelsea - "I'm on Fire" - UK punk mainstays perform a fairly run-of-the-mill song from their catalog.

Oingo Boingo - "Ain't This the Life?" - Way back in the long ago, before he became Tim Burton's music man, Danny Elfman was a true maniac. Oingo Boingo was one of the tightest bands ever and had a stunningly original '80s sound. It's a short song, but a blistering performance.

Echo and the Bunnymen - "The Puppet" - This is '80s British angst music at its best. Everyone owns one of their albums. They may not admit it, but they do.

Jools Holland - "Foolish I Know" - Before Jools got his BBC show, he was in bands and had a successful career as a sort of nerdish barworm piano guy.

XTC - "Respectable Street" - All through the '80s and into the '90s, XTC was the textbook definition of power pop. Frontman Andy Partridge looks a bit foppish with his big bow tie, though.



Klaus Nomi - "Total Eclipse" - Here is the true star of this movie. Nomi was a faux-bionic theatrical opera-wave genius. Sadly, his original band had been dropped by this point at the "advisement" of his record label, but you get to see and, more importantly, hear Nomi.

Athletico Spizz 80 - "Where's Captain Kirk?" - This band went on to become Spizz Energy and this song would be their one big hit. They were a joke band in that their songs were consistently goofy. This performance shows that comic energy, and that fun was their only objective.

The Go-Go's - "We Got the Beat" - Ahhhh, the days of chubby Belinda Carlisle singing the teenage anthem of mall girls everywhere.

Dead Kennedys - "Bleed for Me" – Topping the list of undisputed legends of American punk. Countless kids had a Dead Kennedys tape as their first anti-parent music purchase. The clip almost seems out of place among *Urgh's* more contemporary lineup.

Steel Pulse - "Ku Klux Klan"- Same goes here. Steel Pulse was a fairly straightforward reggae band with severe political songs that may have landed them in the periphery of the punk scene.

Gary Numan - "Down in the Park" - One of the pioneers of the electronic new wave. The performance is one of the best in the movie as he drives around stage in a little coffin go-cart with headlights.

Joan Jett & the Blackhearts - "Bad Reputation" - This is from Joan's breakaway solo album after leaving The Runaways and she does some serious ass-kicking. Young and full of venom, she spits the lyrics out like she has a grudge against someone in the audience.

Magazine - "Model Worker" - Howard Devoto was one of the founding members of the Buzzcocks and left to form Magazine, a band that included members of the Bad Seeds and the Banshees. The song is great, catchy and Devoto paces with the snide look of someone with a 200+ IQ.

Surf Punks - "My Beach" - This is probably one of the biggest jock bands ever, their reason for existing within the punk framework a total mystery to some. This is also probably the most scatterbrained segment of the movie, with bikinis, a fake lifeguard hut, boobs, a numskull song and a girl being manhandled while crowdsurfing.

Members - "Offshore Banking Business" - A low-impact pseudo-reggae/new wave/maybe-a-little-punk band...basically they stunk. Someone somewhere out there disagrees with me, and for that I'm really almost sorry.

Au Pairs - "Come Again" - This British band was and is difficult to define. Only recently becoming widely recognized as influential, they likely inspired much of what's happened in more recent years, from emo to the Pixies. The song is great and the performance is solid.

The Cramps - "Tear it Up" - This is another one of the film's great performances. The Cramps narrowly sidestepped punk rock. Here, they're scary as shit, playing straight-up, in-your-face, make-you-puke rock 'n' roll. There will never be anyone else like Lux Interior.

Invisible Sex - "Valium" - There are rumors that this band was created just for this movie. Turns out that's not true, but it's a good story. The performers wear white sheets, some have cardboard guitars and you can't understand what they say.

Pere Ubu - "Birdies" - This band is the remaining members of Detroit's Rocket from the Tombs (the other half went on to form the Dead Boys). The song has an odd mathematical progression, which is what Pere Ubu was known for. Great musicians in blue-collar suits, and it's nice to see a large man singing after all the underfed heroin chic prancing across the stages.

Devo - "Uncontrollable Urge" - More memorable than any other moment in *Urgh!* Never known to give a half-assed show, Devo is dead-on and tighter than the Hoover Dam. This is another band that predates punk rock, contrary to popular belief, forming in the early '70s at Kent State College following the notorious protest shootings.

Alley Cats - "Nothing Means Nothing Anymore" - These young'ns turn in a straightforward rocker.

John Otway - "Cheryl's Coming Home" - This is some loon from England and I think the song is about a long lost love or a relative coming home by train but he goes on and on about the choo-choo and eventually loses cohesion.

Gang of Four - "He'd Send in the Army" - Needless to say, an influential band from the new wave glory days with a solid performance and lots of precision stomping back and forth across the stage. They would go on to bring the world the hit "I Love a Man in Uniform" and today they're cited as a major predecessor to multiple genres.

999 - "Homicide" - The crucial English punk group with their most well-known song, though they give a pretty mellow performance. Still, good musicianship and good audience response.

The Fleshtones - "Shadow Line" - This is the beginning of what we know as "college rock," which would creep across the '80s like an ever-worsening cold.

X - "Beyond and Back" - They always give a strong performance, it's a great song and it's very much what American punk rock looked and sounded like at the time. People love to attach the look of spikes and bondage pants to punk but here in the States, a lot of the kids couldn't afford those things. So jeans, T-shirts and old vintage clothes were seen a lot more than the high-polished gear of the picture-postcard "punker."

Skafish - "Sign of the Cross"- I don't even know how to describe the mess that is Skafish or the disco new wave monstrosity that he bleats out. A major label would-be "outsider musician," Skafish will mostly be remembered for his inhumanly large schnozz and Three-Stooges-in-a-monastery haircut.

Splodgenessabounds - "Two Little Boys" - This is a very packed stage full of pirate-punk people doing their best to ruin a nice little Scottish folk song.

UB40 - "Madame Medusa" - The ultimate white reggae band of any generation, their inclusion in the film and general existence goes from a mystery all the way into an abomination by song's end.

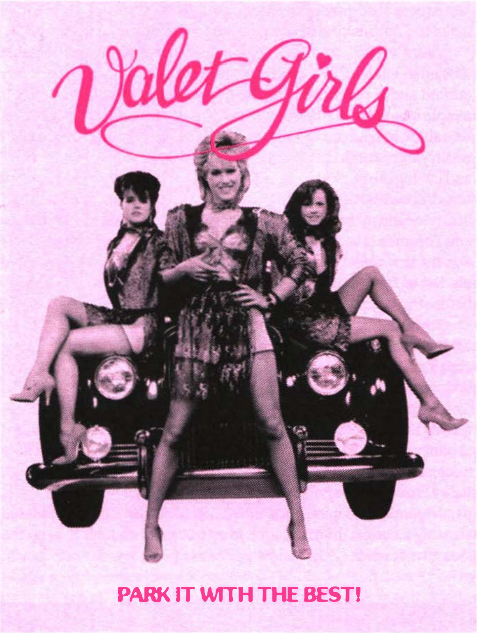
The Police - "Roxanne" & "So Lonely" - Again with the yawn. The Police were a decent band who put out decent albums and thankfully Stewart Copeland left to go make movie soundtracks. The End.

Urgh! was shot in 1980, brilliantly capturing the energy of both the bands and the fans. A double-album soundtrack was released but is a mere shadow to the experience offered by the film. A consistent rarity on the home video market, it was shown throughout the decade on the syndicated *Night Flight* program, which I'm sure made a new waver out of many a naïve late-night television viewer. (*JH*)

VALET GIRLS

Dir. Rafal Zielinski / 1987

An aspiring female musician gets a job as a valet for a rich producer in the hopes to score a record deal.


Valet Girls
PARK IT WITH THE BEST!

This movie is one big party scene. It's actually a few parties strewn together, but why complain? Some of the people who attend are: a mermaid, a fat guy in a flamenco outfit, big bodybuilders, Ron Jeremy, an S&M lady who has a dude on a leash, Tony Cox (the dwarf in *Bad Santa*) and a pink-haired Cyndi Lauper look-alike (she says she's in the band Chemistry Set) who does nitrous hits in the bathroom. This film also has some great '80s music. New wave band The Fibonaccis appear as Sexy Holiday. The main character Lucy has a band called Lady Freud & the New Psychotics. The movie is worth it if only for the part where the valet boys crash the party dressed as chickens, throw bugs on all the food and pour fake vomit on the host. Party on!!! (BC)

VALLEY GIRL aka REBEL DREAMS

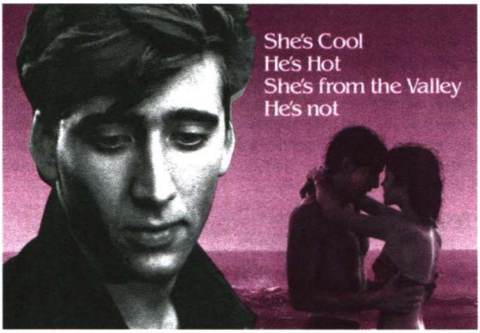
Dir. Martha Coolidge / 1983

The first and final word in punk heartbreak.

By 1983, punk rock and its participants had already been depicted in documentaries, sympathized with in dramas and dismembered in exploitation epics. But it wasn't until Martha Coolidge's blow-dried masterpiece *Valley Girl* that punk was given the all-American teen comedy treatment, establishing the familiar movement as a legitimate faction of teen culture rather than a technicolored freakshow. In the film's innocent (but still believable) version of LA, new wavers frolic on the beach with bikini girls and tanned meatheads, though dyed hair and torn denim are still enough to draw the proverbial line in the sand.

Julie (Deborah Foreman) first spots Randy (18-year-old Nicolas Cage) emerging from the waves, glistening as he runs up onto the shore. They're immediately stricken by each other, Julie unaware that his hot bod (and strangely triangular chest hair) is normally wrapped in a punk wardrobe. He later reappears at a suburban party, where Julie has spent the evening swapping icy stares with her no-good ex Tommy (Michael Bowen). Randy and his best pal Fred (Cameron Dye) stand out among the preps like two sore thumbs, their shocking style drawing frowns from everyone in the room. But when Randy and Julie's eyes meet again, nothing else exists...until Tommy and his pinhead jock lackeys oust the new wave interlopers from the house.

But it's too late. The star-crossed teens are already head-over-heels, and Randy will stop at nothing to win Julie's heart. Shaking off the shame of his public beating, he sneaks back in via a bathroom window and hides in the shower while an endless assortment of Izod youth use the restroom for makeouts, makeup and impromptu cocaine socials. His patience pays off and Julie eventually reappears to gussy up. She's startled by Randy's presence but agrees to escape the party at his side, bringing her friend Stacey (Heidi Holicker) as backup (much to the delight of Fred).



Tepid synth rock blares through the car speakers as they cruise into the comparatively darker territory of Hollywood, Stacey covering her squeaky-clean ears, yelling, "I hate this song! I hate this music!" Julie is much less repulsed, staring wide-eyed at the bright lights and studded punks of the city as if she's never stepped outside the suburbs as Randy shouts out to nightlifers on every block (some of whom were planted by the filmmakers for maximum effect). They park at a club and enter the red-lit venue, the girls visibly intimidated by the clamorous, claustrophobic room full of punks and elegant lowlifes. The Plimsouls perform onstage as the kids secure a table and begin their first actual conversation, which immediately exposes the rift between their worlds. Even while questioning each other's fundamental basics ("You guys think you're *so different*, don't you?"), Julie and Randy become increasingly amorous. After yelling over the band for a while, the kids ride up to a lookout point above the city and complete their evening with a necking session.

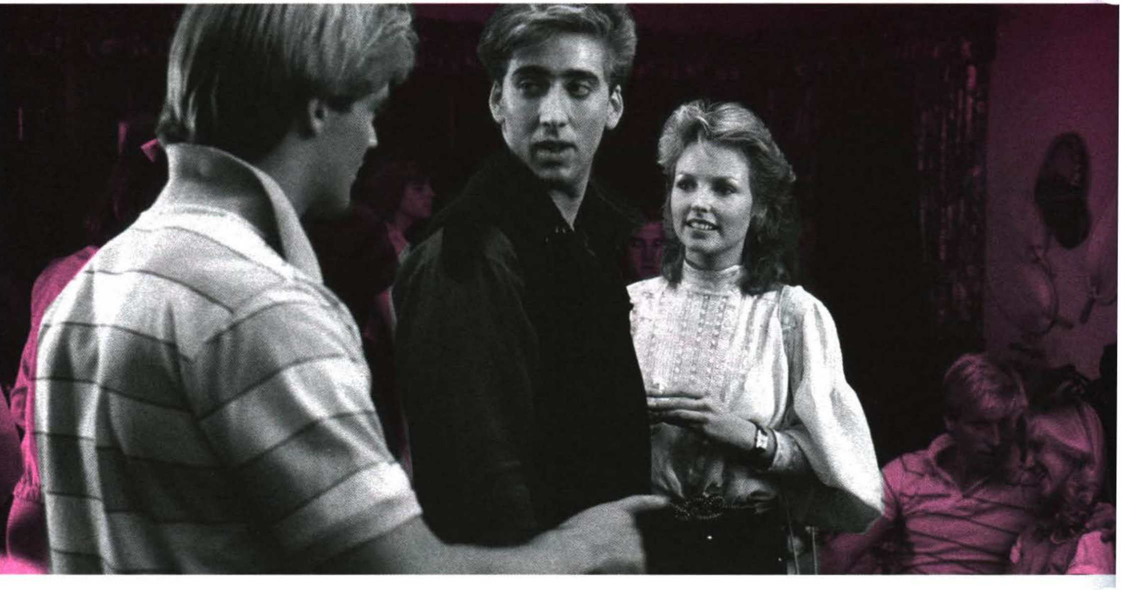
It's daylight by the time Julie makes it home to her hippie parents (Colleen Camp and Frederic Forrest), and Randy is barely able to let her go. He visits her later that same day, kicking off a satisfying falling-in-love montage set to Modern English's "Melt With You." But the flawlessness of their meeting is short-lived, the relationship coming under fire during a sleepover. After the girls hop around in lingerie to a Waitresses album, Julie's friends ambush her with their grossly incorrect comparison of Randy and the clearly inferior Tommy. Though her feelings for Randy are undeniable, she slowly succumbs to social pressures; her uncertainty subtly manifesting as she paints new wave makeup designs on her cheekbones. She's further worn down during a Du-par's Restaurant heart-to-heart with Loryn (the great E.G. Daily), hesitantly acknowledging the safer road of dating within her peer group. No sooner has she completely given in than Tommy reappears to claim ownership.

This of course leaves the matter of tearing out Randy's heart, which is easily the most powerful scene in the film. After not hearing from Julie for days, he stops by her house with his doe eyes in tow. Clearly pained, she does her best to cold-shoulder him until she finally blurts out that she just doesn't want to see him any more. He's shell-shocked, reeling back in an apologetic daze before it dawns on him that she's fallen under her friends' influence. Torn between love and rage, he leaves her sobbing in the doorway, turning back to berate her in her own native tongue: "Fuck you...fuck off. Fer sure. Like totally." This immortal line was an improvisation from Cage, capping off a difficult scene made all the more challenging because he and Foreman were actually dating at the time.

Randy returns to Hollywood to drown his sorrows in familiar territory. At the club, he resorts to a depressing bathroom tryst with a former girlfriend. The filthy ladies room walls are covered with Circle Jerks flyers and other punk shrapnel, and women pass by ignoring the pair's indiscreet grinding. Evidently the house band, The Plimsouls break into their KROQ hit "A Million Miles Away" as Randy makes his shameful stumble back out onto the street. Fred is there to rescue him from a cholo beatdown and knock some sense into his emotionally-shattered pal. Nevertheless, Randy is resolute, following Julie to school, dedicating songs to her on the radio and even donning wild disguises to infiltrate her dates with Tommy. When all else fails, he and Fred invade her prom without a plan. New wave pop sensation Josie Cotton and her band knock out the hits (including their great "Johnny Are You Queer?") while Tommy puts inappropriate moves on Randy's one true love. As the two straight-laced teens are crowned the dance's king and queen, Fred and Randy make their ultimate strike in the name of romantic justice.

Valley Girl is crucial for countless reasons, its considerable '80s nostalgia cred secondary to the fact that it's simply a perfectly crafted and acted movie. For the first time, punks were the sanest people onscreen, victims of the childish impulses of the more "presentable" characters around them. Director Coolidge has said, "I was trying to catch the electricity of that first high school romance," and having the punks be the least caricaturesque players in the story was the bold move that makes that happen. Coolidge never lets their lifestyle eclipse their personalities, and the electricity between Cage and Foreman is as strong as any screen romance of the decade. This was the first major film role for both of them, Cage having changed his name from Coppola (spelled just like Uncle Francis) shortly before the *Valley Girl* audition.

The crew shot modestly, using whatever existing locations would have them. Randy's nightclub hangout was long-running club The Central (now The Viper Room), and a substitution had to be found for official valley girl mall The Galleria, who turned down Coolidge for her interior shots. The production company representatives had little faith in the film, but were floored by the finished product as well as the public's reaction. A ten-day script + a three week shoot + a tiny budget had somehow equaled a huge success. *Valley Girl* was a major accomplishment, opening new doors for its participants, reshaping teen movies for an entire generation and creating a comic, dramatic love story powerful enough to keep the '80s alive forever. (ZC)



MARTHA COOLIDGE

Director – *VALLEY GIRL; CITY GIRL; JOY OF SEX*

VALLEY GIRL
Opens April 29 - at theatres everywhere!
GANNETT OUTDOOR

DAM: You'd been doing other film work before you started to work on *Valley Girl*.

MC: I had, but it was really independent and it was mostly documentaries, though not entirely.

And was working on those films what eventually brought you into doing that as part of the industry in LA?

I'm from Connecticut and then I went to Rhode Island School of Design and ultimately majored in film. And I went to NYU film school, but I didn't do it so neatly in that order. I did it all out of order, and I went to other schools in New York. I started off as an art student and evolved into an independent filmmaker and evolved more into a narrative filmmaker.

I moved to LA when I realized that I was needing more money for my movies than I could imagine raising on my own—I'd been raising the money for my films and producing them. Because I wanted to go into narrative work, they got bigger. And I heard they were thinking about hiring women directors in LA, and it wasn't entirely true; they gave one or two women over the next ten years a chance. I was encouraged to come to Los Angeles by Francis Ford Coppola so I did.

What year was that?

I moved to LA around 1976 and I went back and forth for the next two years.

Between LA and New York?

Yeah.

And where was it that things really started to fall together for you?

Actually, before *Valley Girl*, they kind of fell together and then fell apart. I expatriated and went to Canada and came back again. So, it was a dramatic period of like six years. It came back together when Francis came back from doing *Apocalypse Now* and I got my first contract with Zoetrope. I started working on a musical based on the music business called *Photoplay*. It was about a young girl, who is not the type to be a groupie, gets dragged to a concert and ends up meeting this big rock star who's fighting writer's block and doesn't know what to do with his life now that he's really famous. Then he meets this young girl who has a very fresh perspective on life, and it was a love story. I developed that at Zoetrope for three or four years and that's why I was hitting the music scene every night. I knew everybody. I went to all the clubs in LA, San Francisco and New York—this was the late '70s, very early '80s—and that's why I was so primed to do *Valley Girl*.

So you already had this type of story in your sights? Maybe subconsciously even before you saw the script?

Well, it was big time and it was probably more like *The Rose* than *Valley Girl*, but it was a big rock 'n' roll love story. I had seen every music film. I looked at music documentaries. I met all the up-and-comers, all the stars. I probably saw four or five hundred groups. I knew all the clubs and genres and A&R guys at the record companies. And just because of all that, I was very familiar with all the nuances of the scene: the punks, the new wave and the new stuff coming in from Europe. It just was a very exciting time in music. So I was deep, deep into that. Then, when the story came to me through my friends, the producers of *Valley Girl*, I could absolutely see how I could do it.

Now, before that, I got a film in Toronto called *City Girl*. When everything fell apart at Zoetrope and they went under, I moved to Toronto and started a movie that somebody else had started and they threw me into it. It was about an underground free press photographer, who was very ambitious, but was following and reporting on a cult: photographing them and really monitoring the punk and club scenes. It was a very interesting, way out of its time movie that never really got finished. It got finished enough so that it showed in a festival, and was retitled later as *The City Girl* after Peter Bogdanovich bought it and helped me finish it. It was a rough cut of that film that the producers of *Valley Girl* saw and said I should do their movie.

So they approached you with the script in hand?

But we rewrote *Valley Girl* together because it needed some key scenes.

And then I remember hearing you say that *Valley Girl* was originally written by a couple of guys that weren't quite comfortable enough with the female characters.

Well, they weren't comfortable enough to direct it. They wrote it. It was ambitious in that they wanted to make a real movie; they didn't want to just make some exploitation thing. And then when I read it, it was so obviously *Romeo and Juliet* and I exaggerated the Valley-Hollywood thing that was sort of rumored to be there, but it isn't really there. There's fans of all those bands in the Valley too, but there was a generational split and there were music style splits so I just exaggerated those and wrote the falling in love and breakup scenes, neither of which were in the original script. I mean, they wrote them, but I wrote them with them.

It seems like it would have been such a drastically different movie without those scenes.

Oh yeah! Had to have those parts. So, that was very obvious to me, and we did it very quickly—I think prep was all of a couple of weeks—and I pulled in every favor from all my connections to put together a whole crew, which actually has gone on to many stellar accomplishments. The oddest thing is that Nic Cage came in and auditioned for the part as "Nic Cage," which was the first time he'd ever auditioned under that name. He was the only Coppola I didn't know, so when he came in I had no idea who he was.

But you liked him despite the fact that—

He blew me away. He was great: perfect for the part.

Do you remember what he read? How he sold that character of Randy?

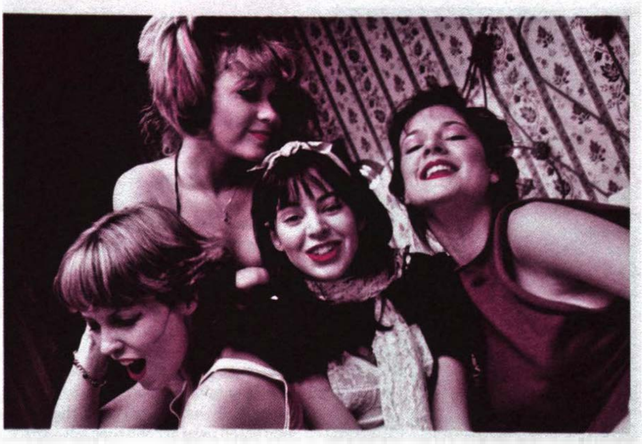
First of all, he was very shy and wouldn't talk in the interview, which is not a bad sign: it's a good sign. But then when he came in and read, he was the guy you saw in the movie. He was perfect: he had male presence; he had humor; he had goofiness; he had intelligence and wonderful, unique delivery. I thought he was great, and then the producers were worried he wasn't handsome enough, but I disagreed.

I disagree too.

He had a real Robert Mitchum quality with more humor.

Speaking of what he brought to the movie, this is kind of a side note, but that harmonica scene—where he takes that 25 cent harmonica and blows that wispy note—that's one of the funniest scenes ever.

It's not a harmonica—well, it *is* a harmonica—but it was made out of wax with fluid in it, like those wax bottles you buy for a couple of pennies that have the fluid in them and you chew them up. He was great...he'd bring stuff in like the chef's hat and the funny glasses and all that stuff—he always came up with ideas. He knew we were doing this scene looking out over the Valley, and I was waiting for the sun to go down. I couldn't see him—I was behind his back—but he pulled something out of his pocket, said, "She's out there somewhere," and he blew this note. And then he started to eat it. Of course I knew exactly what it was by then and at cut I started yelling, "Don't eat it! Don't eat it!" Because I had a feeling that he was so young—he was 18—that he didn't know that if you buy a prop, you should buy more than one. Because he was eating it, and as he freaked out he said, "I'm eating my note that makes me cry!"



So, speaking of stuff like that, how much of the tone came from the actors? Was he the main one who was doing that? Because all the characters seem so full.

I've learned that you don't stop what's working. We went and did the hair. I had a real punk person—not a movie person—do the hair. I hired a kid who was an honest-to-God Hollywood denizen, but who also had a mother who was a costume designer, and that 16-year-old kid did the punk costumes. He had no money, so he put it all together out of thrift shops and his mother showed him how to organize stuff, and then the production designer did the rest of the costumes for the Valley. We had very authentic stuff. To make it even more authentic, Nic started living in his car in Hollywood, and we were all a little nervous about that.

We did a lot of rehearsing on that film...we even went to a school to listen to how the kids really talk in the Valley. That's why we never made the mistake of using anything that was in Moon Zappa's song, like we never said "Gag me with a spoon" because kids in the Valley didn't say it; they just said, "Gag me." Basically, I like to work very closely with the actors and costumes and props. You start playing with things and you get ideas in rehearsal.

When you said you'd done all this research and gone to all these clubs, the music was such a big component of the film—

A huge component. I worked with a guy named Michael Papale who has great ears, and we didn't know how we were going to put the deal together because we didn't have money for music. I was working under the assumption that we would work it all out, because music hadn't gotten all blown out of proportion in terms of budget yet. KROQ would play things that were over or before they came out, so I listened to KROQ constantly, plus I knew all these bands, and if I heard a song that spoke of a sequence, I would pick it and sic Michael on it. An interesting one was "I Melt With You." I heard it on the radio, but they didn't back-announce, so I had no idea what the title was. I heard it a couple of times but never got the title. I kept trying to sing it to Michael to give him an idea of what the song was, and finally he found it. The song had a very minimal release and died in a very short period of time. We put that song in the movie and it came out again and it still plays.

"Electric Avenue" probably was the very last song in. It went in at the very last minute during the mix. Initially I had two Clash songs in there, but they left because we had a CBS record deal. In the end it was my lawyer, Peter Hoffman, who put the whole music deal together based on equal pay across the board for everybody. That originally included a record deal. It went wrong only because the company printed the wrong credits on the film and were too cheap to pay to make new credits. So the credits on the movie are wrong.

So, it was a real adventure. I wanted the songs to progress the movie's story and add to it, but not necessarily just repeat everything that's going on in the scene. I went also with mood, and then I went with this theoretical difference between Hollywood and the Valley.

I wanted a sense of humor. And I also really believed that I had to have very fast music. Unless somebody died, I generally don't like slow music in movies. So, we went through hundreds and hundreds of songs to get what we got. Obviously, the bands who are onscreen, I had to get them before we shot the movie. Part of the luck of it was that because it was independent and because it was so quick, from conception to release it was six months. Studios don't do that.

How did you end up choosing The Plimsouls and Josie Cotton?

With Josie, I loved the record. She was funny and sort of the epitome of Valley music, at least as far as what we said it was in our story. They drove up from Texas in an old car to be in the movie. The Plimsouls were just a really hot band around town. It was originally gonna be X, but they chickened out because they didn't want to offend their Valley fans by saying they were only a Hollywood band. So they didn't do it, and it ended up being The Plimsouls, a really different sound. I was happy with X, but "A Million Miles Away" was great for the movie.

What club were those scenes shot in?

The interior of the club was...I think it's The Viper Room now. But the exterior club where he's in the parking lot and he walks in was a completely different place. That's a stand-alone building on Vine that had the alley on one side and the parking lot on the other that I needed. Because I'm not gonna pay to shut down Sunset Blvd.—forget it—we had to be on a side street.

Were the people in those scenes real?

Yeah, those were real people from the streets.

It always warms my heart to hear that the people hanging around the punk clubs are the genuine article.

Oh, they're real. You can't buy that. And the funny thing is at the Valley prom, we hired the extras from fraternities and sororities, so they were college kids, but it turned out they were from rival schools. Those scenes took a few days to shoot and these two schools got into several big fights. There were actual rumbles going on in the extras' holding area.

And then they had to do it on camera later on.

Yes, they had the food fight.

When the movie came out it was a big success...

Yes. Bigger than anyone thought it would be. In fact, it was bigger than anyone knows because I don't think the company really reported everything. Our limitations were really just as many prints as they were willing to make. They only made 400 prints, so they bicycled them, starting heavy on the East and West Coasts, and then they moved it around so it hit the Midwest later. But they were offered money by Paramount and several other studios—when they were offered four million dollars for this movie that cost less than $500,000—then Atlantic said we can make more money by ourselves, so they did.

What was the reaction from the type of people this movie was about? You were seeing these screenings in LA, so you probably saw it with people who were like those depicted in the movie.

It was considered like bubblegum pop, like new wave music. On the other hand, it's a celebration of youth and that period. As a documentary filmmaker, I was aware of the treasure of the real thing, and that's why I chose to really document the culture so to speak. And what's amazing to me is how long it lasted. That is astonishing. There are still kids getting mohawks. Fashion keeps doing this. And those tight, colored jeans are back! It's fascinating to me how powerful that whole period has been, musically and in fashion.

There's so much of that movie that got referenced later on. It was very influential...maybe more than you expected?

Sometimes people tell me they still look at it every year. It's an anthem for so many people, and these people are certainly not LA. And that's one thing I knew from traveling around and looking at the clubs everywhere. It's not just in LA; it's a whole phenomenon. It was really about a generational difference and a music style, it wasn't just the Valley. I went to Washington 15 or 20 years later to lobby and all the people that worked for the Senators and Congressmen would go, "Oh, *Valley Girl* is my anthem!" In the funniest places, you'd run into the fans. And the fact that the special edition came out so much later, and even the record finally came out 11 years later from Rhino.

There were those sudden knockoffs that came out.

Yeah, from everybody. But that's the sincerest form of flattery.

The ones we saw were *The Vals* and *Valet Girls*. Did you end up watching any of those just out of morbid curiosity?

I never did that. I was offered enough knockoffs, because, of course, when you make something they just want you to make it over and over again. And that became really hard to deal with. I loved doing *Real Genius* but I was offered so many really bad teen movies that had no depth to them and it was hard. It was great to be making movies and making money—I never thought I'd make money—but at a certain point I couldn't get out of high school. I remember the *New York Times* review of *Plain Clothes* and the woman said, "When are they going to let this woman out of high school?" That movie was about a cop who hated high school and has to go undercover in one and hates every minute of it. So, it was kind of fun.

We wrote about that in the book—just a little bit—because it wasn't as punk-centric.

No, not as much. But, frankly, all the movies I made had punks in them up till that movie because they had to; they were part of the age and the time.

We also covered *Joy of Sex*. The "We be Cuttin' Some Worms" punk is one of the favorites. As a side note, I never knew the story on *City Girl*.

City Girl...what happened is Bogdanovich went bankrupt. It was shown at a couple of festivals and it was illegally released in Europe. People have told me they've seen it there. He could never get it together. No one picked it up to clear the music rights and that's the problem: the music in the movie is big-time music like Prince. It's very raw, that movie.

It's about a cult, the underground club scene and it's set in Toronto. It had raw sexuality. It's sort of tongue-in-cheek, with a little flip, on what a man in that world would do. The woman is taking the man's role. She's fooling around. There's an incredible scene—I can't even believe I shot it—of men stripping for women in a club. It's really out there. It's also where I did my first sex-in-the-bathroom scene, prior to the one in *Valley Girl*.

That's a tragic *Valley Girl* scene. With the expression on his face when he just kind of gives in to doing this thing that he doesn't really want to do. It's so sad.

This is a different kind of sex-in-the-bathroom scene...I guess I've done a lot of sex-in-the-bathroom.

CAMERON DYE

"Fred" – *VALLEY GIRL*

DAM: Was *Valley Girl* a role that you chased down?

CD: It was something I auditioned for. Initially, I read with Judd Nelson...at the time he was starting to get big and he opted out because there was some other movie he was doing. So, then I read with Nic, who I'd never met. Nic is just kind of strange and different and we had a good time together, so we ended up doing it. And it was all people, as far as I knew, who were my age and had never done a film. Nic had done *Rumble Fish*, and he'd done *Fast Times*, but his part in those was cut down to nothing, where you wouldn't even know he's in it.

The older people in the cast—Colleen Camp and Frederic Forrest—were the big deal because of *Apocalypse Now*. But to me, the big deal was The Plimsouls because they were a favorite band of mine going into that movie. The one thing I had faith in was the music, because on paper, it was kind of...I don't wanna say *dumb*, but it didn't seem well thought out. But where Martha Coolidge is great is that we had a couple weeks of rehearsing and she just stressed a lot as to who was who to each other, who you hang with, what are the relationships of these people? And the music was very important to her. She laid out to me early on some bands she was considering and they were all groups that hadn't really been heard yet, hadn't broken on KROQ, the big new wave station in LA. She told me there was gonna be a band for the Valley side and a band for the Hollywood side. She had Josie Cotton for the girls. I asked her, "Who's gonna be our band?" And, initially it was going to be X, and I thought, "Oh, that's it." But then they fell out for some reason, and then she told me that we could get The Plimsouls. Again, I loved that band—they maybe weren't as strong of a choice for the movie as X, because X were more punk. To me, The Plimsouls were never a punk band: they were just a great fucking rock 'n' roll band. I wound up playing with a couple of those guys for a while later on.

I'd never done a movie so I had no idea how they came together. That movie was made on a shoestring budget—I think for under $300,000—so, we're all changing clothes in the garage and stuff and I'm going, wow, I'm making a movie. So, we did that and it was done and I think it was just three and a half weeks—it was pretty quick. When it came out, I was really surprised when people took to it. I know a big local blessing was that new wave DJ Rodney on the Roq gave it his OK, in his own way. He said, "I know the title might throw you, but it's really cool." So, locally, it had a big impact, and I wasn't aware until later that people around the country caught on too.

How much of the character do you think was you versus what came off of Martha Coolidge's page?

I didn't dress that way necessarily. The fun thing as an actor is that you can dress a different way on a different day and keep people guessing. Sean Frye, he was kind of the mod kid in *E.T.* and he dressed pretty hip, he was friends with the designer of the film. So I wore his clothes and they colored my hair.

So the whole time, you had anticipated that you were going to have the role of Fred, is that right?

Yeah. That casting director remembers saying they couldn't figure out where to put me. It's still the case with me; I'm not really nasty enough to be a bad guy, so they couldn't figure out what to do...so that's where I wound up.

Historically, in your career, have you most often been recognized as Fred, like when you're just walking down the street?

Yes. And I would say it depends on what haircut I've got going. There was a slight period where I just thought, "Ugh, I've got other stuff." But after a while I realized if *Valley Girl* meant that much to a certain generation, I should really kind of embrace that. So I don't mind being recognized as Fred.

VALLEY GIRL: THE REMAKE

Dir. Michelle O'Marah / 2002

"Two questions: (1) Why are most films shown in the gallery or museum context so expensive and so pukeoid? (2) In the shadow of the Hollywood sign, what is the difference between an appropriation and a remake?" (Bruce Hainsley, ArtForum)

Martha Coolidge's *Valley Girl* captured and immortalized the '80s obsession with suburban LA mall slang, and its legacy remains so potent that 25 years later, artist Michelle O'Marah and her friends decided to revisit it with their own low-budget remake. Every detail is lovingly (re)created, from the costumes to the soundtrack! See a nightclub made out of painted construction paper! See the sketchiest use of a green screen ever! See Peter Case of The Plimsouls played by a woman in a beret!

This sounds like ironic hipster hell. It's not. The sincerity of the retelling is apparent, and the performances by a largely unprofessional cast don't just mimic those of their 1983 counterparts, they imbue them with character that combines the most memorable aspects of the originals with a clumsy charm all their own. The valley girls in O'Marah's film inhabit their roles 100%, complete with vocal mannerisms that only those who've watched the original 100 times will even spot. The new Stacy is a fiery bitch who puts the original to shame, and frequent O'Marah collaborator Tim Jackson owns his role as sidekick Fred Bailey. But perhaps most importantly, the film works without seeing the original (I've seen it with people unburdened by nostalgia who were sucked into the story and characters within minutes).

O'Marah's film started as an art project aimed solely at playing in a gallery context, as a means of exploring the type of pleasure we get from certain kinds of supposedly vacuous films. But with a public screening at the New York Underground Film Festival in 2006, other screenings followed and the "project" morphed into a film in its own right, one that simultaneously questions the complacency spurred on by formulaic romantic comedy filmmaking and conveys its own kind of pleasure triggers, all of which revel in the awkwardness of real romance.

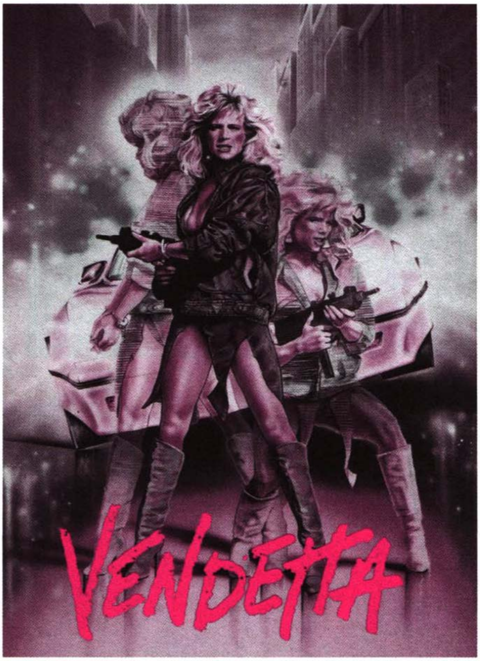
"In my construction of it, I tried to expose all the seams," says O'Marah. "It's completely unbelievable; everything is one-dimensional and people are just standing in front of walls when they're supposed to be in a store, and everyone's the wrong age. There are all kinds of things along the way that show you that it's a construction. But at the same time, I know you want to believe it."

Cardboard sets (and sandals...and sushi...) aside, there is an attention to detail here that no one over-academicizing the original would bother to pull off. The film is not available to the general public, existing only as an original art piece. (*KJ*)

VENDETTA

Dir. Bruce Logan / 1986

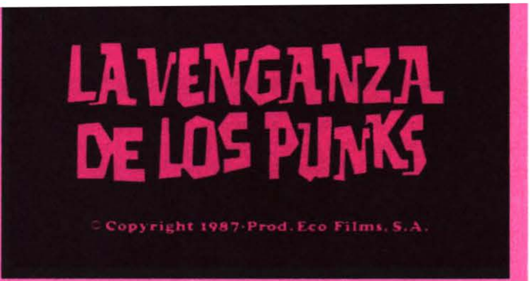
A ferocious stuntwoman gets deliberately thrown in prison to avenge her sister's murder.

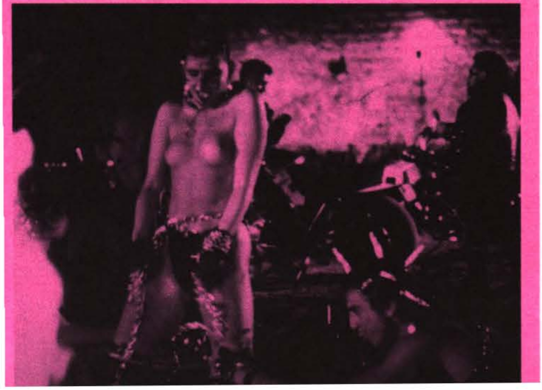


Women-in-prison films join German scat porn and mentally-disabled sports star stories as the most formulaic of genres. But once in a very great while, a feature will rise above its limitations and shine as a unique and inspiring exception, showcasing new horizons in a staid format and opening the doorway for a flood of bold new concepts.

Invariably, this movie will be ignored. Such is the case with one-time-only director Logan's brilliant *Vendetta*, the most raging, blazing, earth-shaking, unseen WIP film of its time.

Pyrotechnic daredevil Laurie (Karen Chase) and her little sis Bonnie shoot the breeze in a hick bar where five new wave girls play bluegrass music for cowboys. The drummer's foot-tall mohawk is as heartbreaking as their lovesick Southern jams. At the end of the night, Bonnie halts a would-be rapist with a bullet and is rewarded with two years in the big house. The cellblock's bulldog-butch big boss Kay (Sandy Martin) takes an immediate interest, and the trouble begins. Rejected, Kay sends one of her lackeys (complete with a





cherry-red shaved puffball 'do) to shoot Bonnie up with dope and dump her to her death from the fourth-story railing.

Naturally, big sister Laurie has no choice but to settle the score. She steals the judge's Cadillac and goes on a drunken automotive destruction spree in order to get thrown straight in the pen. She's assigned to bunk with a racist Hispanic folk singer who complains that her "brown sound will be ruined by this Gringa shit." Meanwhile, the villainous Kay enjoys a conjugal visit with a dealer and smuggles four bags of heroin back to her cell by shoving them up her not-so-sacred place. Trashyyyy!! In the mess hall, a female Prince impersonator performs before an in-house set by actual punk band the Screamin' Sirens, led by LA legend Pleasant Gehman. It's not long before Laurie runs afoul of Kay and her rugged crew. Naturally, the lesser baddies are challenged and violently dispatched one by one, leading up to the main event. If any doubt remained as to who to root for, the already odious Kay is revealed to be...a vegetarian! BOOOOOO!!!! (ZC)

LA VENGANZA DE LOS PUNKS

Dir. Damián Acosta Esparza / 1989

One man's war against punk.

The unanticipated sequel to Mexico's blistering Intrepidos Punks kicks off with an explosive prison break that frees Tarzan (masked professional wrestler El Fantasma) and his bloodthirsty gang of day-glo lunatics. After the necessary celebratory orgy, the group infiltrates a cop's home, raping and machine-gunning his entire family. They leave him sobbing in the wreckage and vowing revenge. He tracks them to their desert lair and watches them engage in the honored punk tradition of riding space-age motorcycles around a giant wooden effigy of Satan. This is followed with an occult ceremony involving a rainbow-colored Klan cone and the mass gnawing of a severed sheep's head. The lawman infiltrates their ranks and gets his first taste of sweet retribution when he shoves a long wooden stake into a male punk anus. He later forces another punk halfway down a well and dumps a sack of rattlesnakes on his head. This vigilante torture fantasy escalates until the inevitable confrontation with the powerful Tarzan himself.

With the second film, production quality has improved, but the punk gang has shed all innocence and likeability. The fun-loving garishness so present in Intrepidos has given way to a grisly darkness that incorporates Viking casualwear, tin foil liberty spikes, swastika facepaint and half-beards. Though the Bronson-esque plot is handled with true venom, the viewer longs for the punks as they were in the previous adventure: kinder, gentler rapists and psychopaths. (ZC)

A VERY BRADY SEQUEL

Dir. Arlene Sanford / 1996

Same old story gets sexed up for the big screen.

Continuing in the model established by *The Brady Bunch Movie*, the focus is on fish-out-of-water situations mixed with familiar bits from the show. Unfortunately, the sequel works even harder than the original in playing up the sexual subtext of the mixed family dynamic: Greg and Marsha are hot for each other, Carol (Shelley Long) has some sort of phallic obsession and Sam the Butcher offers to slip Alice his special tube steak. Yikes.

One of the things that makes being a Brady in the '90s so hard is keeping up their '70s style. For instance, when Carol's longtime hairdresser retires she has to go out in search of someone to maintain her cone-domed flippy haircut. She finds herself in the chair of Sergio (David Spade), who sports an upscale, Alexander McQueen-style punk look. He takes out every weapon in his arsenal, including a chainsaw and curlers, to modernize her, and of course she comes out with the exact same hairdo.

At most, Brady fanatics will get a kick out of references to Johnny Bravo, Tiger the Dog and Cousin Oliver, but the movie doesn't really add anything to the franchise with its paper-thin plot (a con man claiming to be Carol's first husband shows up to and tries to steal a valuable antique horse statue) and heavy reliance on cheap sight gags. (*LAF*)

VICE ACADEMY III

Dir. Rick Sloane / 1991

The girls in blue must capture an escaped convict with green hair.

Late-nite sexy version of the *Police Academy* films that's much funnier than it should be. It has all the skin one would expect, but actually isn't boring during the non-nude scenes. Linnea Quigley fans will be disappointed that she doesn't reprise her role from the first two installments, but Ginger Lynn Allen and Elizabeth Kaitan are fine as the ladycop duo. David Skinner plays a spikymohawked punk that steals a newspaper. Jay Richardson is the real champion here as the commissioner. He shows up in a lot of straight-to-video and cable movies, but is always stealing the scenes with his dry persona. It's in the *Vice Academy* series that he truly shines. Don't stop at this one...keep going until you've watched all six! (*BC*)

VICE VERSA

Dir. Brian Gilbert / 1988

Father and son Marshall and Charlie Seymour (Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage) switch bodies in this heart-warming comedy, in which all principal parties learn valuable and lasting life lessons, and engage in many antics (of the wacky variety) along the way.

Sometimes punk is not outwardly apparent. We all know the stereotypical accoutrements (mohawk, leather jacket, piercings, etc.), but what isn't always obvious is the punk rock spirit. Many characteristics encompass this, such as a snotty attitude, pointed individuality and a general disdain for the status quo. As Charlie, Savage displays a true punk rock spirit in *Vice Versa*, a good-natured and winning body-swap comedy. He plays drums in a rockin' kiddie blues band, is bored at school and always speaks his mind. At one point he declares, "Music is my life!" As an 11-year old, he's more appealing and interesting than most 20-somethings that walk among us in a pop culture-induced daze. Savage equips himself nicely as both a child and adult; he's certainly the main attraction, as Reinhold does what appears to be an impression of either Bill or Ted of *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* after switching bodies with his onscreen son.

The movie maintains an upbeat attitude that is infectious and never tries to be profound. Charlie is put through a typical school day, but with the mouth and attitude of a corporate climber, and pulls it off nicely. Marshall stumbles and bumbles his way through the corporate world as a grown man with the mind of a child (seemingly a child that eats paint chips). There are pitfalls that many adult actors fall into when playing children; let's call it the Robin Williams Syndrome. By exaggerating and overacting to the point of spasticism, the adult actor believes they are conveying a childlike persona, when in actuality they appear to be doing a cocaine-fueled stand-up routine. Reinhold commits nothing quite so egregious, and has fun in the role, but there is a disconnect between Savage's child and Reinhold's version.

The scenes with punk characters may be a perfect comment on how Hollywood views them. The first occurs within the safe and sterile confines of a department store, in which Marshall, possessed with Charlie's mind, jams out with a blow-dried new waver in the music department. The youth bangs out freeze-dried hard rock licks as Marshall keeps the beat, and everyone—customers included—has a grand old time. The second encounter lasts only seconds and takes place in a police station—big surprise—where we view a full-on punk being hauled in by a copper. This one has multi-colored hair, anti-establishment slogans scrawled on his jean jacket and is the polar opposite of the customer-friendly new waver. Little comment is necessary in the obvious visual and ideological contrariness contained in this dichotomy: on one hand we have the ideal "fun punk," who entertains mall regulars with his perfect hair and hi-top Chuck Taylors; on the other, we have the malcontent, society's wasted youth, residing in the one and only place he belongs... jail. The truest punk resides in Charlie, as a rugged individualist who applies the DIY ethos to every aspect of his life. Too bad Hollywood doesn't acknowledge that punk can be more than a symbol for a society in absolute peril. (*SC*)

VICIOUS LIPS aka PLEASURE PLANET

Dir. Albert Pyun / 1987

An intergalactic talent agent recruits a high school student to replace the dead singer of new wave sensations The Vicious Lips.

This planet-hopping rock 'n' roll fairytale features a fair number of memorable components, kicking off early with a triple-breasted alien prostitute sporting six mohawks (note that this was three years before Paul Verhoeven's triple-breasted alien prostitute in *Total Recall*). Here, the darkness of space fosters an eternal nightlife, lit by neon and insect zappers, some of which dangle from the headstocks of The Vicious Lips' guitars. The glitter-wigged members of this all-female act are less than welcoming to their new singer, especially when they're called out to a new world to present her debut. Unfortunately, they crash on a desert planet and the alien serial killer of 5,000 women is set loose from his on-board holding cell. As the deathbeast crawls through the ship's bowels, the band bickers endlessly. Finally, he erupts among them...and then they bicker some more.

Vocalist Judy Jetson escapes onto the surface of Pleasure Planet Incorporated, where she's temporarily captured by a herd of mutated punk cannibals sporting dyed hair and leather jackets. This is the

VICIOUS
LIPS
featuring
ACE LUCAS
NOW APPEARING

first of several quasi-hallucinatory digressions that draw Judy into panicked desperation, many involving zombified versions of the film's cast. All's well that ends well, and the band make their way to popular club Radioactive Dreams (named for Pyun's second film), where a tuxedo-clad space critter announces the breakthrough performance of their hit song "Lunar Madness." As in *The Wizard of Oz*, characters first seen in Judy's nightmare visions reappear for the happy ending, pointy ears and all, including *Surf II*'s Linda Kerridge as a rocker named Wynzi Krodo. (ZC)

VIRTUOSITY

Dir. Brett Leonard / 1995

SID 6.7 (Russell Crowe) is a computer-generated serial killer who escapes the digital world to wreak havoc. Lieutenant Barnes (Denzel Washington) must stop him. Hahaha. These guys both have Oscars. HA HA HAAA.

Oh look. A robot bartender. It must be the future. Yet another terrible mid-'90s sci-fi jam. It feels like Washington accidentally starred in a Van Damme vehicle. This is one of those movies where computers make a lot of unnecessary noises. Someone will open up a file and it will swoosh and beep. Crowe's character is a program comprising a thousand of the worst killers ever. This could have led to an interesting performance, but instead we get to see his rockin'-out face as he composes a tune made of the screams of nightclub hostages. You will get second-hand embarrassment so bad, you'll swear you're watching someone pee their pants in a school play. SID 6.7 struts to The Bee Gees while punks follow behind and laugh. The loud techno over the fight scenes will appeal to the *Mortal Kombat* fans out there. Ladies, prepare for the Crowemeister posing nude with a knife. Heck, wait for your hubby to go out with his poker buddies, grab a tub of ice cream and watch Crowe eat shards of broken glass. (BC)

VOYAGE OF THE ROCK ALIENS

Dir. James Fargo / 1987

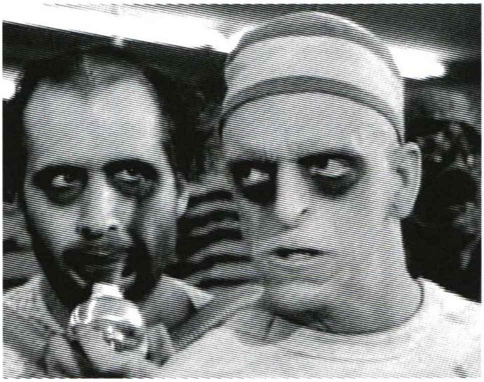
A new wave rock group gets wild with small-town denizens.

An enormous spacecraft shaped like a V-neck guitar tears through the galaxy in search of new types of music. On the first distant world they investigate, an unnamed young woman (Pia Zadora) defects from her quasi-post-apocalyptic scooter gang to perform a duet with Jermaine Jackson. This culminates in a choreographed kicking

battle between Jackson's cronies and dual-wheeled New Romantics. This entire segment plays for the duration of the song and is then jettisoned, with no bearing on the rest of the film.

Meanwhile, the pink-uniformed, purple-haired galactic explorers lock into orbit around the earth. Below, in the small town of Spielburg, partying teens dance to '50s rock blared by mohawked goofballs while a giant squid gets stomped on by a fat jogger. The aliens beam to Earth in a phone booth and are spotted by the zany elderly sheriff (*Harold & Maude*'s Ruth Gordon). When their nigh-robotic leader ABCD (pronounced "Absid") lays eyes on aerobicize-chic bopper Dee Dee (also Pia Zadora) for the first time, he literally explodes in an amorous frenzy, incurring the wrath of her arrogant rock icon boyfriend Frankie (Craig Sheffer). He tries using a Digital Sexual Response Stimulator to catch her attention, but an accidental misprogramming results in ABCD being sexual assaulted by every male within 50 feet. One of the electronically homosexualized attackers is a punk scumbo in a black tank top. World-renowned alopecian Michael Berryman pops up in an extended gag as an escaped psychotic mental patient who can't get his chainsaw to work. There's the inevitable rockabilly vs. new wave alien battle-of-the-bands, and interstellar love kinda blooms.

Unexpected product from a man who'd directed one of the *Dirty Harry* movies. Ruth Gordon is her charming self, but walks through the role, which is forgivable for any 88-year-old actress appearing in a movie like this. The Oscar-winning legend would die immediately after production. Several songs were provided by the alien crew, 80% of which were played by real-life Arizona electronic pop band Rhema. The incessant musical interludes numb as they entertain, but Frankie's duel with a bobcat—appropriately titled "Nature of the Beast"—pulls the film's insanity into an animalistic new dimension. Additionally, Voyage of the Rock Aliens ultimately earns its place in cinematic history for the revolutionary scene of a fire hydrant peeing on a dog. (*ZC*)



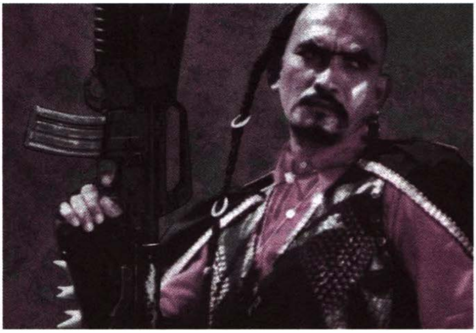
W

aka W IS WAR

Dir. Willie Milan / 1983

A well-armed drug ring/religious cult has met its match in a renegade special agent known as Enforcer W-2.

Oh Lordy-Lou, do they make some crazy movies in the Philippines, and *W* is right up there with *Killing of Satan* as one of the country's most deranged exports. Rivaled only by Indonesia for its wild movie industry, Filipino film is often characterized by low budgets, exotic locations, crude production values and unpredictably insane plots... like this one, for instance. A militaristic religious cult (with a great theme song) is bent on becoming the "biggest marijuana manufacturing plant in the whole of Asia." Now, despite the fact that there evidently hasn't been an apocalypse, the cult dresses like the villains from *The Road Warrior*. If you have a fetish for mohawked dudes jogging shirtless, then take care watching *W*, as you may end up soiling your shorts. The very punk gang/cult members wear spiked and studded black leather, and those that aren't mohawked are shaven bald. Some sport face paint while others drive tricked-out *Mad Max*-style dune buggies. They're led by a monobrowed guy in a red cape that looks like Ming the Merciless' nephew. The brains behind the operation is a nerdy white guy in glasses who dresses in a shiny S&M outfit and does his best to look grim.



One day the cult is hanging out in a hotel valet parking area. They spy a group of special police officers ("I think they're pigs...so let's teach those pigs a lesson") and, after a scuffle, one of the leather cult ends up shot dead by a cop. This steel-eyed officer goes by the tax form-inspired name Enforcer W-2, and his fancy shooting up opens a vicious shitstorm. W-2's actions don't go over very well with his superior but the tough cop doesn't care. After all, it's his wedding night. He and his bride spend their special evening frolicking on the beach, but are interrupted by old unibrow and the rest of the leather cult. Seeking payback for their fallen comrade, the gang pushes the couple around a bit, then cut Enforcer W-2's wiener off! It's not a graphic scene and I didn't quite believe it had happened until a few scenes later when he grabs his crotch and yells, "I'm a eunuch!" W-2 is soon betrayed by his wife (who starts banging Enforcer V-1) and kicked off the force. Bent on revenge, he teams with an androgynous female ex-cult member who became disillusioned with the gang when it dipped its beak in the high-stakes marijuana trade. Our dickless hero and his new friend build a custom armored Camaro, recruit some of his old Enforcer pals and attack the leather cult's beachside headquarters in a sandy, explosion-packed finale. (*SH*)

WALKING THE EDGE

Dir. Norbert Meisel / 1983

A loser reluctantly aids a woman in avenging her child's death.

A greasy-grimy-n-gritty action/revenge picture set in the hopeless environ of early '80s Los Angeles. Christine Holloway (Nancy Kwan, also director Meisel's wife) is physically restrained as she watches Brusstar (Joe Spinell) and his gang of lowlife hoods murder her son and white-collar drug-pushing husband. Meanwhile, hard-luck debt collector Jason Walk (the great Robert Forster) is having a run of extra tough breaks: a cheating girlfriend, an irate boss and erectile dysfunction have him on the emotional ropes. By chance, he ends up giving Christine a ride and becomes embroiled in her suicidal vendetta.

Brusstar and his crew masquerade as auto mechanics and spend their evenings at a sleazy watering hole called The Punk's Place, where a '77-style band clang out a garbled mess for the modest crowd of slamdancing street warriors. The bar runner has a blue sharkfin 'do and Apache facepaint, and the extras sport some downright convincing get-ups. One would believe this was a bona fide punk dive if not for the Smokey and the Bandit décor. The oily Brusstar lords over the joint in his Hawaiian shirt, sauntering through the patrons and kissing an occasional pierced cheek. He's a perfect character for Spinell to play: neurotic, ruthless and seething with rage. Violence is delivered unflinchingly, including point-blank gunshots to the face and a rectal knifing in a filthy restroom. One torture scene is particularly brutal, in which even Brusstar's boneheaded flunkies seem unsettled by his coldness.

Walking the Edge also features a top-notch performance from the unequalled Forster, who matches the helpless-hero tension he pulls off so masterfully in other incredible early '80s films like *Vigilante* and *Alligator*. Though he's apparently not a fan of the era's countercultural audio output; while puffing up to the muscular owner of The Punk's Place, he spouts: "Take this fucking music of yours and shove it up your kazoo." (*ZC*)

WAR IS MENSTRUAL ENVY

Dir. Nick Zedd / 1992

Neonized field trips into a psychedelic black hole.

The title of Zedd's third feature is sliced into a man's chest with a razorblade, the letters running red. Kembra Pfahler (frontwoman of art-damaging rock group The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black) takes an orange-skinned, blue screen levitation-ride over dazzling landscapes. As she sails into undersea footage, rubber tentacles creep into frame and invade her orifices. At a bar, drag queens hobnob with punks and tattoo extremists until their fun is ruined by an abusive biker. A conservative dignitary is molested into discomfort by Pfahler (now blue-skinned) and renowned sex pioneer Annie Sprinkle. A bandaged man is tended to by a topless nun. His gauze is removed to reveal an actual severe burn victim, the camera scanning his body like the surface of the moon. He's outfitted in casual battlegear and presented with Sprinkle in a harem outfit. She proceeds to tongue his scorched nipples. And so on...colors pulsate, realities blend and babies are impaled on bayonets. Even fans of Zedd's work will find themselves dizzy after the film's 77 minutes of blinding imagery, but that's certainly no reason to avoid taking the transdimensional leap. (*ZC*)

WARRIOR OF THE LOST WORLD

Dir. David Worth / 1983

A middle-aged man on a talking motorcycle is mankind's last hope.

He violently gyrates over a bowl of ice cream. During tryouts for Al's band, a man with red spiked hair, dog collar and a mustache plays a banjo and sings about not wanting to do his laundry. A punk on guitar also auditions. Al dresses up like Billy Idol but decides to stick with Hawaiian shirts. A punk excitedly waits outside of Al's backstage door. This is all very funny for a 10-year-old boy...everyone else should rent the vastly superior *UHF*. (*BC*)

WEIRD SCIENCE

Dir. John Hughes / 1985

Two lusty teens use science to fulfill their adolescent desires.

What is it with John Hughes? His status as a genuine filmmaker and the "voice of a generation" needs to be re-assessed. Hughes is the quintessential '80s automaton: set him in motion and he relentlessly cranks out mushy formulaic comedies for a decade straight. Hughes confines himself to strict parameters of operation, relying on recycled adolescent clichés and well-worn situations to limply push his films towards their inevitable conclusions. *Weird Science* stuffs a lot of whiz-bang special effects and grotesqueries into a film that, in essence, is another runny, tepid coming-of-age story.

Wyatt and Gary (Ilan Mitchell-Smith and Anthony Michael Hall respectively) are a couple of hopeless horndogs who long for popularity and sex, or maybe just popularity as a means to have sex. Whatever their motives, it becomes abundantly clear that these two are deeply enslaved by their procreative urges. They find a stopgap solution in the form of homemade hot bod Kelly LeBrock, whom they name—as one would name a household pet—Lisa. The process by which the two nerds conjure their dream girl is confusing and irrelevant, a glaring scriptwriter's gimmick. She's just another in a long line of Hughes' sidekicks, girlfriends and coaches who elicit generic confidence and shallow insight from their protagonists. The main difference is that LeBrock's character is a living, breathing sex toy, subject to the whims of her creators, with no autonomy or real free will of her own. This creepy fact voids any sympathy we might have for the boys' plight. In fact, their struggle seems self-inflicted; they're a couple of salivating hormone piles with no personality beyond their sex drives. With no sympathetic characters and lots of mundane sci-fi distractions, the film is quickly reduced to a technical exercise.

As the machinery creaks into gear, we wait for the inevitable resolution to plop out onto the conveyor belt. Somehow, Gary and Wyatt will gain self-confidence and as a result, get girlfriends, which will naturally lead to some hot boffing. The film touches on all the '80s teen earmarks with dry efficiency. There are a couple of smarmy jagoffs who constantly humiliate the hapless duo, a bully older brother named Chet (played peerlessly by Bill Paxton), the threat of parental intervention and crippling self-doubt. All of these stumbling blocks are wholly unconvincing, and infused with a forced "off-beat" sense of humor, with the exception of Paxton's Chet.

Gary and Wyatt's ultimate opposition to getting laid comes in the form of radioactive mutant biker punks, summoned by Lisa to aid in their transformation from whimpering pansies to virile, confident young studs. Vernon Wells (who played Lord Humungus' right-hand man Wez in *The Road Warrior*) is the ringleader of the misfits, and to his credit, it looks as if Vern never took off his costume after *The Road Warrior* wrapped. He simply rolled out of bed in his quasi-Native American makeup and feathers (mohawk still intact), half-mesh/half-leather sleeveless shirt and motorcycle boots and rode over to the *Weird Science* set to scream and point guns. Wells' girlfriend looks like the lead singer of Bow Wow Wow in shackles. But perhaps the most striking of the gang is the freak who looks like an unmasked Phantom of the Opera, wearing chainmail gloves and clad head-to-toe in leather. Gary and Wyatt send these unruly interdimensional punks packing and gain the confidence to use their wieners on real girls. (*SC*)

WHAT ABOUT ME

Dir. Rachel Amodeo / 1993

A young woman is forced into homelessness
by the big-city rigors of NYC.

Made at the end of the heyday of the downtown New York indie film scene, Amodeo's *What About Me* underscores many of the endings in the subculture of the era. Shot in the stark black-and-white employed by many of her contemporaries (Jim Jarmusch, Lech Kowalski, Amos Poe et al.), Amodeo uses a wide range of punk rock legends, fading artists, actors and other N.Y. culture vultures to populate her modern Little Matchstick Girl scenario.

The story opens with Lisa (played by the director), a sweet but somewhat socially naïve girl, moving in with her aunt in New York

City. Though an adult, Lisa is barely capable of fending for herself. Matters aren't helped much when her aunt dies, leaving the hapless girl to the advances of a lecherous landlord. After being raped and thrown out on the street, Lisa is transformed into a full-blown bag lady. What follows is a pitch black comedy of terrors that goes from sad to pathetic to hopeful to terminal.

What About Me could have been an unrelenting downer, but Amodeo lightens the proceedings with an Edward Gorey-esque slant on Lisa's struggle. Oddball cameos by beat legend Gregory Corso, Nick Zedd, Dee Dee Ramone, Johnny Thunders and Jerry Nolan enliven what could otherwise have been a totally grim exercise. The director also manages to include things specific to the time in which her film was made. Crack (along with heroin) threatened to kill off the once-thriving Lower East Side scene, and the Tompkins Square Park riots signaled the plight of the homeless and the general shape of things to come in a draconian gentrified post-Giuliani New York. When the film ends in front of the Statue of Liberty, it seems to signify a eulogy to a city that no longer exists. (*JS*)

WHATEVER

Dir. Susan Skoog / 1998

A disinterested high school virgin navigates the parties, pitfalls and pricks of teen life.

Anna is a smokin'-n-swearin' young woman at odds with her small town and everyone in it. She also aggressively ignores her femininity while her ladyfriends get high, pregnant and both. At a house party, she opens up enough to make out with the local hippie artist-type... for some reason. I mean, she could have gone for the bespectacled spike-hawked teen who was sitting in the corner of the living room, engrossed in a book about the Appalachian Frontier. Still, after being slapped by her mother, Anna runs to her bedroom and listens to The Jam, which is nearly punk enough to disinfect her. Later, she has sex with an ex-con/gravedigger. Life is neat. (ZC)

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HAROLD SMITH?

Dir. Peter Hewitt / 1999

A young man, whose father possesses superhuman mental abilities, has an identity crisis when his love for disco is compromised by his attraction to a punk rocker.

Essentially a drippy romantic comedy set during the bustling year of 1977, this is actually the tale of *Vince* Smith (Michael Legge), a disco-loving lad who lives with his parents in Sheffield. His father Harold (Tom Courtenay) is a mild-mannered fellow who happens to have magical telekinetic powers. Harold had initially kept his talents a secret but becomes a sensation after he inadvertently causes several pacemakers to fail, thus killing a few senior citizens.

While watching this film, there were several moments when I really did wonder whatever happened to Harold Smith, because he's barely in it and his story is much more interesting than his son's. Vince likes to dance in his room to the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack in front of a John Travolta poster. One fateful night, he spots a cute new waver (Laura Fraser) and falls in love at first sight. She's hanging out with a group of punks who are walking down the street drinking Heinekens. Daz (Charlie Hunnam) is the head punk, who declares, "Everything is shit! Every fucking thing!" He then dumps out the contents of a garbage can and yells "fucking wanker" at a car. Daz is a stereotypical wonder with a blond/black devil horn hairdo, an overcoat decorated with a Union Jack and a smiley face pendant around his neck. Vince's love interest wears a leather choker, lots of mascara and a biker jacket.

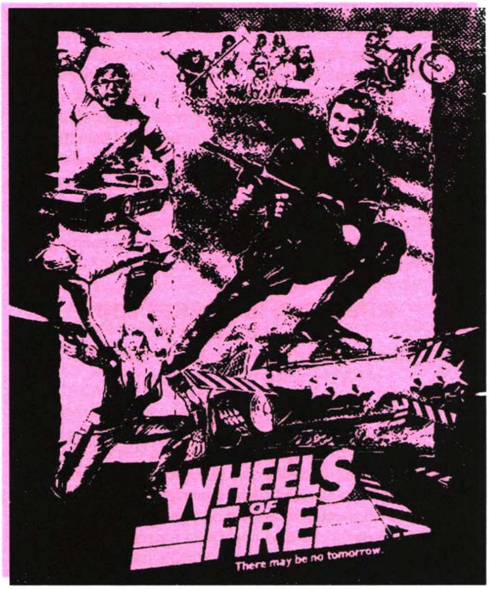
Vince decides to impress her and alters his wardrobe to reflect his adopted disposition. He spraypaints "anarcy" (oops) on one of his polyester shirts and tussles his hair. ("Now I'm a punk rocker!") Instead of approaching the girl directly, he attempts to fit in with the other punks, failing miserably to the point that Daz ends up popping a juicy zit in Vince's face. Fortunately, our hero discovers his love interest is a false punk too. Her name is Joanna and, coincidently, they work for the same law firm. Yuppie by day and phony punk by night...pee-uke! In the film's second most annoying scene, Vince and Joanna recite the lyrics of Clash anthem "White Riot" to each other. I think this bit is supposed to be some sort of allusion to *Romeo and Juliet* with a punk rock twist but, in reality, it's a bunch of horseshit. "Anarchy in the UK" is also used on the soundtrack, as are two Buzzcocks songs.

The most obnoxious moment comes at the film's climax. Making one final attempt to win Joanna's heart, Vince goes to a punk club where a pseudo-Sex Pistols band is playing. She rejects him, having ditched the punk rock world entirely. Harold Smith (remember him) teleports himself to the club, stops a fight between Vince and Daz and inspires Vince to perform a disco dance. The song "Night Fever" magically plays and Vince unleashes his moves. In the real world, Vince would be gobbed on until he was dripping with saliva but, instead, the band plays along to the fucking Bee Gees, Joanna's knickers get moist and the punk crowd claps along to the disco beat. What the FUCK?!!??!? (*SH*)

WHEELS OF FIRE

Dir. Cirio H. Santiago / 1985

A tough loner crosses paths with a barbaric gang in the nuclear wastelands.


WHEELS OF FIRE
There may be no tomorrow

From prolific filmmaker Santiago (the Philippines' answer to Roger Corman) comes this limp entry into the mid-'80s post-apocalyptic adventure genre. Among a lot of competition, *Wheels of Fire* (tied with another Santiago craptacular called *Raiders of the Sun*, a film that actually has the balls to recycle footage from *Wheels*!) may have the undesirable triple honor of being the suckiest, sleaziest and dullest of the many *Road Warrior* rip-offs.

In a familiar "near future," society has crumbled, everybody lives in a desert army tent and pretty much everything has been destroyed except for cars. Across this bleak landscape travels a leather-clad loner named Trace (Gary Watkins) whose car has a Batman-style jet flame exhaust thingy on the back. Trace is sure a ringer for Mad Max, but the real style Xerox here is the car, which may as well have Mel Gibson's name on the title papers. Our hero meets up with his sister Arlie (Lynda Wiesmeier, another former *Playboy* playmate-turned-exploitation actress) at a half-assed battle arena. Arlie introduces Trace to her dumb, denim-clad boyfriend Bo who's about to have a showdown with a punk-looking guy with a Sid Vicious padlock choker conveniently named "Punk." At the last minute, Punk switches places with a tougher warrior and Bo loses the fight. The "thunderdome" audience members consist of a jaw-droppingly hilarious collection of randomly mismatched outfits. It looks like Santiago cleaned out his whole wardrobe department as the onlookers are made up of ninjas, punks, hippies, guys in radioactive suits, pirates, Mongol warriors, Mexican banditos, Sunni Muslims and people wearing yellow rain jackets.

After this preposterous scene, the entertainment value declines severely as the siblings end up clashing with a gang led by Scourge (Joseph Anderson), a deeply nasty dude with enormous shoulder pads and a painted-on widow's peak. Only a few of his goons sport punk accoutrements, but one is wild enough to drive a mohawked car! Trace splits up with his sister and soon the bad guys catch Arlie and Bo making out. Equal-opportunity rapists, the gang has their way with both of them. Then they tie a topless Arlie spread-eagle to the hood of a car and drive her back to headquarters for more and more raping. Meanwhile, Trace causes lots of bad guys to drive off cliffs in slow motion, saves (then kills) Bo and eventually encounters some *Road Warrior* refugees, a religious cult with a rocket, a woman named Spike (Laura Banks) with a trained eagle, a kid named Stinger, a grunting midget in a Civil War uniform, *Time Machine*-type Morlock monsters, cavemen, a car with cow hides attached to it and a big military group called The Ownership Army. You'd think with all these wild plot elements that *Wheels of Fire* might be worth watching, yet the film manages to be massively misogynistic, monotonous and consistently uninvolving, causing you to grow a long, white beard in just 81 minutes. (*SH*)

WHERE THE DAY TAKES YOU

Dir. Marc Rocco / 1992

A hand-wringingly dramatic all-star exploration
of LA's homeless teen drug casualties.

The opening credits sequence displays the standard myriad of Southern California's human husks, ranging from purse snatchers to several expertly composed punks. Green 'dos and a towering mohawk once again illuminate the utter hopelessness of the late 20th century urban wasteland. This montage gives way to an unexpected Christian metal concert, where the frontman informs the fist-pumping crowd that "God has a plan for each of them." Banners read "GOD RULES" and "GOD ROCKS THE '90s." Vaguely lovable street urchin King (Dermot Mulroney) interrupts the show, correctly informs the band that "they're shitty," and executes a perfect three-story stage dive. Also on hand is junkie Greg (Sean Astin) and Will Smith as hyperactive, dentally-challenged paraplegic Manny. Other tweakers and sleazoids are portrayed by Lara Flynn Boyle, David Arquette, Alyssa Milano, the underappreciated James LeGros, Balthazar Getty, Ricki Lake and Kyle MacLachlan, who shoots up between his toes while mumbling, "Just say no." A squat punk girl smokes in a soup kitchen. Stephen Tobolowsky appears as a wealthy man with a fetish for rubbing boys' faces, and Greg's drug counselor is played by Christian Slater at the height of his Jack Nicholson-emulation phase.

As everything rushes towards its inevitably crushing conclusion, this film from the director of Coreys vehicle *Dream a Little Dream* firmly secures its place in the heavy-handed hard-luck teen drama category, but a strong script from actual LA punk Kurt Voss (*Border Radio*) and the bulk of the performances earn it a few more points for sincerity than any other post-'80s film in the genre. (*ZC*)

WHISKERS

Dir. Jimmy Kaufman / 1997

A shy 10-year-old has only one friend, his beloved cat, who gets
transformed by an Egyptian animal goddess into a goofy human.

Punks show up in the darndest places. Take this middling Canadian made-for-cable kids movie. Produced by Hallmark Entertainment for Showtime, *Whiskers* is a story about a loser kid whose only friend ain't even human. Jed (Michael Caloz) and his family move to a new town and, already a little socially awkward, Jed has a hard time making new friends. Some scruffy kids in crooked baseball caps ask him if he wants to play and throw a tennis ball at him. Confronted by unfriendly peers, Jed falls back on his longstanding relationship with family cat Whiskers. Afraid that his parents might have a plan to separate him from his pet, Jed goes to a museum where there's an Egyptian Cat Goddess exhibit. Jed makes a plea to her and the Goddess heeds the young lad's appeal. Yes, Whiskers is magically transformed into a fully-dressed man (Brent Carver) who drinks out of the toilet. After some mostly unfunny antics, Whiskers falls into a feline identity crisis. Desiring deeper cat companionship he wants to see his mother. Jed, valuing his pussycat's wishes, helps Whiskers track down his relations.

The first stop is the county animal shelter. Don't blink during this scene because—for the love of Pete—there's a goddang punk rocker in the waiting room! Sitting amongst other pet owners is a full-on punk with a haircut and appearance that closely resembles

Mark Venturini's Suicide character in *Return of the Living Dead*. The punk appears to have either a pet rat or ferret and, typically, has no dialogue. Whiskers and Jed are more interested in a lady with a pet chicken, and after stirring up some feathers the two are soon kicked out of the animal shelter. A trip to visit with Whiskers' sunglasses-wearing fancy cat brother leads them to find the mother, who's is living out in the country in a house full of fluffy, purring pussycats.

While the cast (particularly Carver) shows some potential, the director has virtually no grasp of comic timing and the story features too many unnecessary, underdeveloped plot elements. Still, kids, cat fanciers and furries will probably be satisfied with all the eye-candy on display in *Whiskers*. (*SH*)

WHISPER & SHOUT

Dir. Dieter Schumann / 1988

A casual late-'80s study of Germany's music scene.

This documentary takes a genre-mixing look at the trials of musicianship, from punk group Feeling B to U2-like alternative crooners Chicoree. The members of female-fronted synth rockers Silly observe, "Audiences used to feel a solidarity with the band. Now, they don't care if they're watching a fire eater or a rock group." That doesn't keep them from putting their flashiest foot forward, with wind chimes on the drums and half the members sporting identical albino Tina Turner haircuts.

Aimless new wave kids lay their sleeping bags out in a train station. Teens speak out in a crowded club, ranting against skinheads and anti-punk prejudices. Feeling B (who'd later split and partially reform as Rammstein) park their decaying military tour bus in a field to play near a small town. The local police unexpectedly overjoyed about the loud rock show: "It is good for the kids!" The visibly conservative parents are every bit as tolerant: "Aw, let them have fun!"

When the music starts in, the adults grin as Germany's future leaders let loose in a polite pogo pit. Feeling B moves on to their next destination, an overcast beach where they perform for patient vacationers and a cluster of high-kicking teen boys.

These young men end up providing the most entertaining observations in the film. Interviewed regarding their opinions on punk itself, one says, "Everyone has to blow off steam. Some punch a wall. Some beat their wives. We dance." (*ZC*)

WIGSTOCK: THE MOVIE

Dir. Barry Shils / 1995

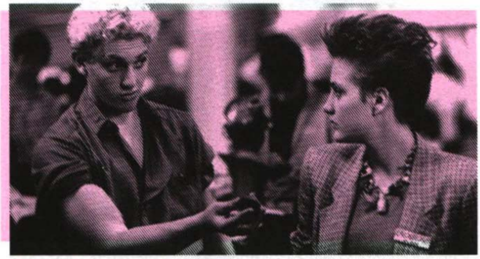
A documentary on the annual drag festival in New York City.

An interesting subject matter that is sadly covered with fairly straightforward filmmaking, but the performers keep it from becoming another forgettable concert film. There are costumes here that would make blind people squint. Long-running drag artist Tabboo! wears a dog collar and two-color styled wig while belting out the song "It's Natural." Pink-mohawked Jackie Beat does a punk song titled "Kiss My Ass." She wears an oversized rubber spiked collar. Alexis Arquette looks fantastic as she hassles slightly uncomfortable roadies. Man-dressed-as-Girl Power! (*BC*)

THE WILD LIFE

Dir. Art Linson / 1984

What happens when B-list brat packers get crazy?



This movie explores the themes of attending high school, graduating from high school, and then attempting to get your first apartment while your girlfriend and all of your friends are still in high school. This Cameron Crowe-penned flick stars a slew of lower-level '80s almost-bratpackers including Eric Stoltz, Chris Penn, Jenny Wright, Lea Thompson and Ilan Mitchell-Smith. It also has the distinction of featuring the talents of Rick Moranis, who sports one hell of a Flock of Seagulls hairdo.

Bill (Stoltz) moves out of mom's house and wants a bachelor pad, but finds he can't afford it on his bowling alley salary. His coworker Tom (Penn) is still in high school and offers to move in with him to split the rent. Mayhem ensues. Yep, *The Wild Life* is a party movie. More impressive than the parties is the casting of the film's extras: Lee Ving is the cable guy who hooks up the TV then stays to party while consuming all of Bill's food and beer; and the redneck-cum-Suicidal Tendancies cholo scumbag from the bowling alley is played by Dick Rude of *Repo Man*.

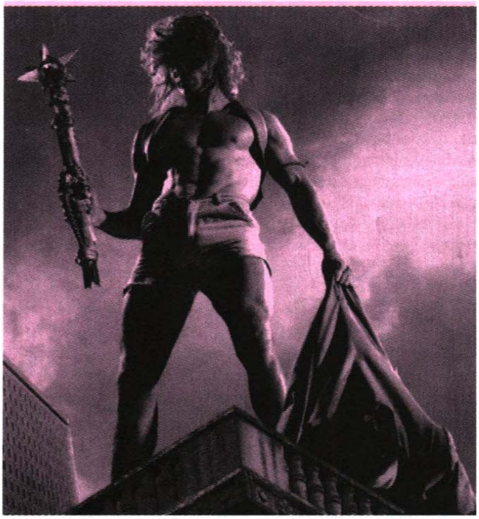
The party segment itself is one of the greatest in '80s movies: wrestlers knock down apartment walls with their heads; there's a poodle in the microwave; there are mandatory Swedish stewardesses; and the Rolling Stones' Ron Wood steals cold chicken from the refrigerator. All in all, it's not a bad way to spend an hour and 25 minutes. (*JH*)

WILD THING

Dir. Max Reid / 1987

A feral crimefighter must take down the big-city syndicate.

Any movie that kicks off with two hippies getting shot is OK by me. New York, 1969. A flower child couple gets executed point blank by crime boss Chopper (the great Robert Davi). Their toddler son escapes into the care of a babbling schizophrenic bag lady who names him "Wild Thing." He grows into a quasi-mute urban Tarzan, killing pigeons with a slingshot and hanging out with the skid row



crazies. A woman is sexually assaulted by two leather thugs—one of whom flaunts a rainbow Barnum & Bailey hairstyle—but she's rescued by Wild Thing and his homemade crossbow. This rugged area of the city is called The Zone, an urban wasteland overpopulated by gang members, hookers and an impressive assemblage of futureless punks. It's also still held in the grip of Chopper, who has spent two decades transforming The Zone into his drug empire, complete with an 11-year-old crackhead. One of the kids at the local youth shelter explains why he left home: "My mom wanted me to play for the Packers. I wanted to play for the Circle Jerks... so here I am." Wild Thing uses charades to tell his life story to empathetic social worker Jane (Kathleen Quinlan). After being cornered—and yowling and hissing like a cat—he's captured by authorities. As the story breaks to the media, a newscaster interviews an effeminate local man (Douglas Leopold, credited as "Gay Man") who describes Wild Thing's crotch in detail. The public rallies for the primal vigilante's freedom as a zebra-pattern rocker with a green mohawk sprays "WILD THING LIVES" on an alley wall. Meanwhile, our hero learns the truth about his parents' death and breaks free of the police to get even with Chopper.

The screenplay is by respected independent filmmaker John Sayles, yet shows a distinctly different flourish from his critically-acclaimed works like *Brother from Another Planet* and *Matewan.* But the rare moments of dialogue from the film's lead are unintentionally brilliant. When romancing Jane, Wild Thing pulls out his most seductive line: "I've seen as many women as there are cockroaches... none of them made me feel like this." He then refers to their passionate sex as "body bump." (*ZC*)

WILD WEST

Dir. David Attwood / 1992

Pakistani band The Honky Tonk Cowboys take their
Western image too far when they start to pull hold-ups.

Naveen Andrews of *Lost* plays the lead here, and I'm sure if you told him back then that he'd be a major sex symbol in one of the biggest TV shows of all time, he'd laugh in your face. And that would be the only laughter heard on the set of this dreary, unfunny British comedy. If you think it's entertaining to see Pakistanis dressed as cowboys, go to the video store, laugh at the picture on the box, put it down and rent something else. A man with half-shaved purple hair watches their band. Notice how quickly he leaves. Other haters include a thug with an eye patch and a man with a metal-covered tank top and a tattoo on his face. The Honky Tonk Cowboys steal a cop car, turn it into a convertible and rob a guitar shop. For some reason, the police have a hard time finding four Pakistani men wearing matching Western shirts in a stolen cop car. Whaaaa? (*BC*)

WILDEST DREAMS

aka BIKINI GENIE

Dir. Chuck Vincent / 1990

A genie helps a jerk in his quest for romance.

Monumentally irritating schmuck Bobby (James Davies) is left to tend to his parents' quiet NYC antique shop. He accidentally unleashes trash talkin' "sexy" genie Dancee (*Emmanuelle* graduate Heidi Paine) from an ancient Egyptian relic, who grants him his greatest wish: that neighborhood ditz bombshell Stella fall madly in love with him. Soon Bobby and Stella are hand-in-hand at the local new wave dive. A spazzoid band blasts out herky-jerky pogo-inducers while dozens of creeps and mutants vibrate to the beat. The crowd goes particularly wild for off-radio hit "Cold Diarrhea in a Dixie Cup." Stella invites the band—and some nubile fans—back to Bobby's parents' place, and they ravage the kitchen before assaulting the groupies. Meanwhile, the hosts sensually rub chocolate cake on each other's faces in bed. Dancee decides she needs to secure a higher-caliber sweetheart for her new master, and sets out on the grueling (for the viewer) task of sifting through the female populace of New York to find this repulsive, gawking simp a suitable girlfriend.

This movie was shot in 1990, but looks as distinctly 1982 as an *E.T.* thermos. Distractingly smooth jazz plays over 90% of the scenes, and watching this lily-livered yutz slap tongues on-camera made me want to vomit out of every pore. A movie like this raises many questions, the foremost being: Why cast a virgin as the lead in a sex comedy? (*ZC*)

WILDING: THE CHILDREN OF VIOLENCE

Dir. Eric Louzil / 1991

A cop at the end of his rope battles teenage maniacs.

A public access-caliber bruiser starring the vastly underappreciated Wings Hauser, though here his talents go untapped. Youth gangs are rampaging aimlessly through LA. One member is a trench-coated, purple-streaked punk girl in a Mentors T-shirt. Their preppy leader Tommy engineers some impressively violent enough rumbles, especially considering his voice hasn't changed yet. To prepare, he pumps lightweight barbells in a room filled with Sex Pistols posters and naked lady calendars. Hauser's partner is played by Joey Travolta, who exhibits much...softness. The closing credit graphics may actually have been done on a Speak & Spell. (*ZC*)

WIRED

Dir. Larry Peerce / 1989

An unfair, lie-filled dramatic bio of John Belushi.

A pre-bald Michael Chiklis hams it up as Belushi. He parties, treats people like dirt and dies. Nowhere does this cover his actual talent for comedy or true love for his friends. This plays like an afterschool special for adults. It starts with Belushi croaking, then his ghost gets picked up by a magical cab driver (I'm not kidding) to revisit his endless downward spiral of a life. Ghost Belushi complains that he left his punk tapes in his hotel room. He goes to a diner and it's filled with punks. Belushi asks them for a quarter. He shoots up by tying a stud belt around his arm. The first person in the film to tell Belushi he has a drug problem is an actor doing a whiny impression of John Landis who pours Belushi's drugs in a toilet and then punches him. Just as with Andy Kaufman crap bio *Man on the Moon*, you wish you were watching actual footage of the comedian, not some actor doing a less-funny version of their brilliant acts. Who wants to see Chiklis doing Belushi doing Brando? Do not watch this film. Instead, rent *Animal House*, *The Blues Brothers* or even just draw a picture of John Belushi on a piece of paper and stare at it. (*BC*)

WIRED TO KILL

Dir. Francis "Franky" Shaeffer / 1986

In a disease-ridden future, a crippled teenager uses all available resources (including a remote-controlled robot) to enact revenge against a vicious gang.

As a scrolling prologue informs us, a 1992 plague messed things up real bad and "now" in 1998, society has essentially imploded. "The only art is the art of survival." In other words, everything is dirty, built out of rusty corrugated metal and filmed through a wasteland-enhancing brown-tinted lens. If it wasn't already obvious, a narrator informs us that "life's a bitch" before giving us information on one survivor's situation. She's Rebecca, a teen who's been kicked out of her dad's house and found refuge with Steve and his family. Steve's a teen electronics whiz who uses his skills to compose annoying synthesizer music, play sub-Atari 2600 video games and build a small remote-controlled robot named Winston.

While Steve's showing off gizmos to his new sister/girlfriend, a grimy, giggling, multiracial, only-in-the-movies, plague-exploiting gang is on the prowl. The gang's leader is a soft-spoken, nerdy, effeminate, Shakespeare-quoting bore named Reegus. In real life, I think these scumbags would've dumped Reegus for the bigger, crazier Sleet ("Tiny" Lister), but none of the relationships in *Wired to Kill* make any sense. Reegus' Ragers engage in a succession of crimes, including chewing on money, snorting drugs and eventually invading Steve's house. The gang beats up his mother, breaks his kneecaps and almost rapes Rebecca before a police siren scares them off. Steve ends up in the hospital while mom and grandma get Reegus and his boys arrested for about 15 minutes because the gang has one of those slimy, criminal-loving lawyers that are so effective in revenge movies. Before you know it, the gang clobbers grandma with a heavy-duty chain and use a monster truck to run over mom's Datsun (with her inside).

Bent on revenge yet wheelchair-bound, Steve employs all his resources to get back at the scuzzy ne'er-do-wells. His vengeance includes using his pet robot to spy on the gang (at one point the scrappy little mechanical bugger grabs a bad guy's nut sack!) and booby-trapping a motorcycle seat (stabbing a gang-banger right in the scrotum!). Taking a break from genital violence, he dresses his sister/girlfriend as a prostitute and sends her to a "punk rock" whorehouse street party where she sells spiked drugs to the gang. This scene is the only part of *Wired to Kill* that features any punks, a few nodding their heads arrhythmically to horrible E-Z synth jazz. After around 40 minutes of seemingly endless retributionary acts, every gang member has been neutered, killed or maimed. (*SH*)

WOLFPACK

Dir. Bill Milling / 1988

Jock gestapo.

Even small-town America must occasionally face the punk scourge. On a rural high school campus, a cluster of mildly gutterfied teens pass money and small packets of powder back and forth. The most streetwise of them bas a shaved head and denim vest that reads "NOISE. HERESY. CHAOS." and features no fewer than three anarchy symbols. The school restrooms and hallways are infested with degenerates, and one even boldly blares his robotic new wave beats on a boombox in the cafeteria while respectable students are trying to eat! Luckily, Wedge and the other members of the school's football team The Wolfpack are on hand to keep things under control. Their ringleader is all-American superstar Butkowski, a well-spoken lad influenced by a similar natural leader named "Adolf Hitler." Butkowski's goal is to clean up by eliminating "the burnouts, the druggies and the greasy punks," but his tactics aren't appealing to his new teammate Sam. When The Wolfpack's fervor results in broken limbs for nerds and elderly shop teachers, Sam takes a stand against tyranny. (*ZC*)

THE WOMAN IN RED

Dir. Gene Wilder / 1984

A man desperately struggles to cheat on his wife.

Wilder scripts, directs and stars in this low-reaching comedy of honorless pursuits. The normally dependable funnyman plays Teddy, a loving husband and father who's blindsided by lust for crimson-clad fashion model Charlotte (ex-Mrs. Steven Seagal Kelly LeBrock). Teddy goes to great lengths to attempt a rendezvous with the object of his desire, including deceiving his wife Dee Dee and teenage daughter. The latter doesn't mind, as she's busy preparing to attend the David Bowie concert with mohawked leather punk Shelly (played by top notch '80s token fat guy Michael Zorek). Shelly is a nigh-catatonic lunkhead whose infatuation with Dee Dee becomes apparent when he trudges into her bedroom and places a hand on her boob.

DEE DEE: I'll scream.
SHELLY: So will I.

Meanwhile, Teddy's efforts to woo Charlotte become increasingly outrageous but miraculously effective, leading to an absolutely surreal Wilder/LeBrock nude scene. The story's resolution is epically unsatisfying, though the film's final frozen frame will stay burned into your retinas for life.

The Woman in Red asks you to sympathize with an unrepentant middle-aged philanderer, so it's no surprise that it's a remake of a French film (*Pardon Mon Affaire*). For all his creative involvement in the project, Wilder seems largely disinterested in his lead role and the subdued performance masks his usual charm. Charles Grodin is a standout as troubled pal Buddy, and the late, great Gilda Radner is cast—rudely, in my opinion—by her real-life husband as the loveless, frumpy office spinster whose romantic overtures repel all men. This half-baked feature actually won an Oscar, but only for Best Song: Stevie Wonder's "I Just Called to Say I Love You," a sentiment much more tender than any displayed onscreen during 90 minutes of tedious infidelity hijinks. (*ZC*)

WOMEN IN ROCK

Dir. Wolfgang Büld / 1980

The other three billion people on Earth can play music too.

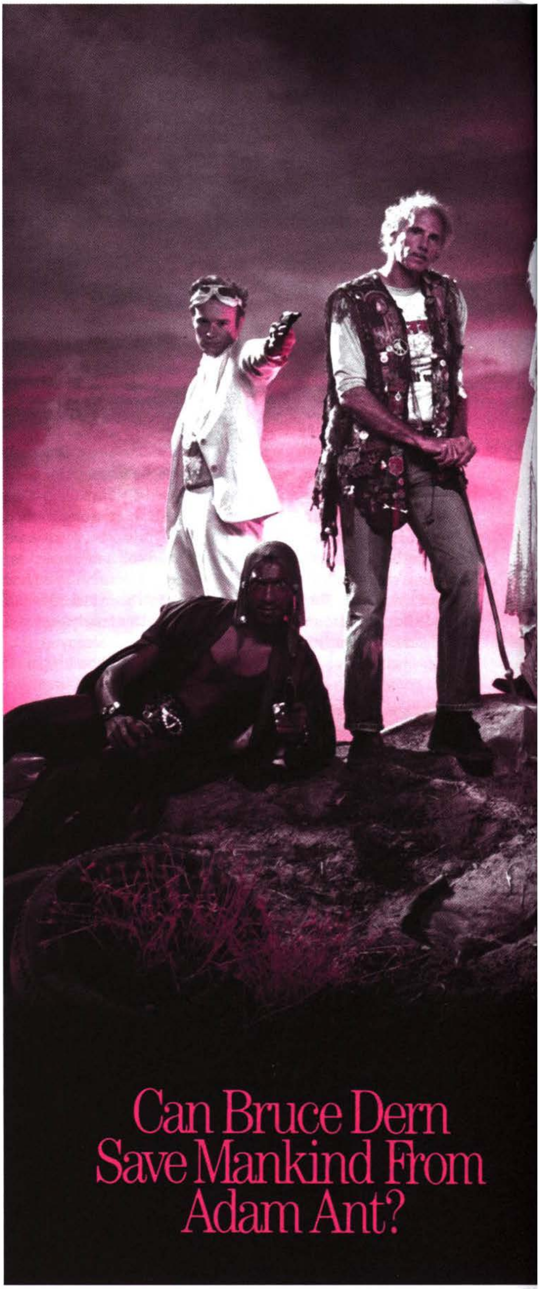
Nina Hagen wails over a photomontage of female recording icons from Bessie Smith to The Slits. Several interview subjects voice their frustrations with being considered "women musicians" rather than just musicians, Siouxsie Sioux going so far as to say she's "the best vocalist period," gender notwithstanding. Hard rockers Girlschool discuss the rise of punk and how it allowed for a more open mindset about who's fit to brandish a guitar. The Slits embody this advancement, and are very outspoken on the aspects of the industry that held female performers at a restricted level for so long. All of these acts and more are also represented through perfectly-shot live segments, many of which show the performers at their best. This is especially true for Nina Hagen, who ends the program with a blistering, vocally schizophrenic rendition of "Ziggy Stardust" that demolishes the original by what's-his-name. (*ZC*)

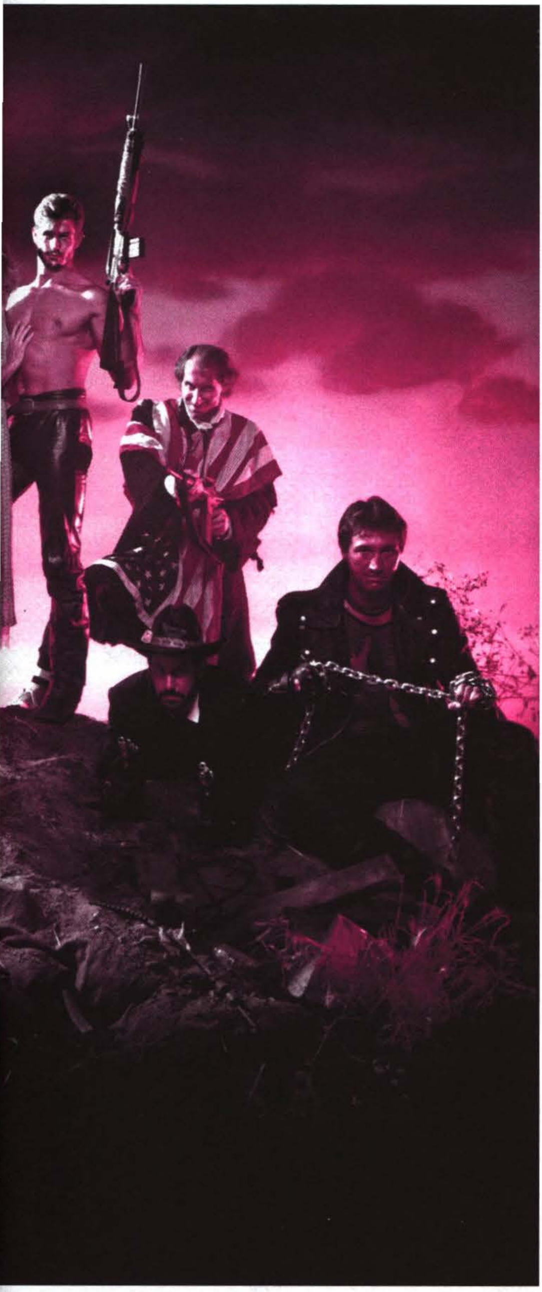
WORLD GONE WILD

Dir. Lee H. Katzin / 1988

The apocalypse has led to a waterless America,
and a lone outpost of strong-hearted survivors gather
their efforts to take a stand against tyranny.

This scorcher is stunningly callous considering its light sci-fi packaging. It's true…the world has gone wild in the wake of a 15-year nuclear showdown that led to a five decade-long drought. Derek Abernathy (Adam Ant) leads a Caucasoid assassination squad into idyllic-by-default desert community Lost Wells. A self-made religious icon, the white-clad zealot reads to his heavily-armed congregation from a hardbound edition of "The Wit and Wisdom of





Charles Manson." He kisses an 8-year-old girl after shooting her father in the face and tearing open her mother's blouse. Following the slaughter, camp leader Ethan (Bruce Dern) takes innocent Angie into The City in search of a defender. The best they can come up with is Ethan's estranged son George (Michael Paré). After a rebellious act of public water distribution, our heroes participate in an exhibition gun duel where the screaming audience of filthy leather punks bet their water coupons on who'll be the victor. George and a handful of faux-futuristic urbanites and wasteland cannibals return to Lost Wells for water, and as in…oh, I don't know…say…*The Road Warrior*, the pure-hearted desert township must enlist the violent nomads' aid in defeating the invading hordes. (ZC)

THE WRAITH

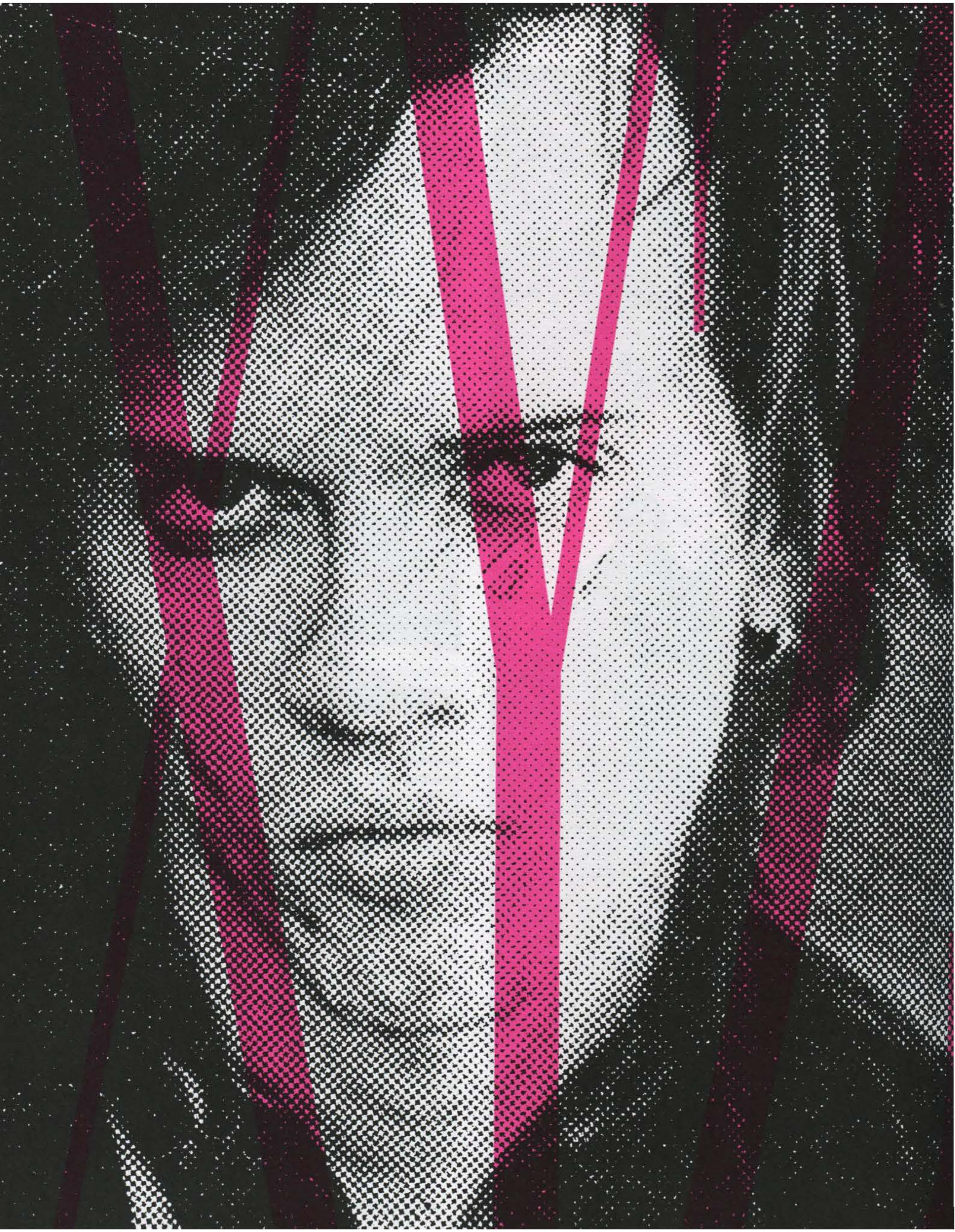
Dir. Mike Marvin / 1986

Four-wheeled supernatural vengeance.

A pack of ruthless Arizona youths have established an unlikely criminal empire, forcing drivers to race for their cars' titles. The gang's psychotic leader Packard (Nick Cassavetes) allows no one else to win, nor does he let them look at his disinterested romantic target Keri (Sherilyn Fenn). Tempers flare when all-American bad boy Jake (Charlie Sheen) rolls into town, and with his arrival comes a mysterious force that lays waste to Packard's goons one by one. This phantom avenger's form alternates between a sleek sports car, a helmeted sci-fi warrior and a ball of blinding light, all of which are used as weapons against the local deviants.

The film is as ambitious as it is uneven, its mammoth explosions neutered by Sheen's non-dimensional performance, but Packard and his lowlifes are incredible. Every member of the gang is a seething stereotype and/or bizarre, impotent goof. Cassavetes is genuinely intimidating in his supervillainous role, a square-jawed tower of obsessive rage. Clint Howard plays the crew's chop-shop scientist Rughead, a frantic mad genius with an eight-inch pompadour. But the most entertaining of them all is brain-dead duo Skank (David Sherrill) and Gutterboy (Jamie Bozian), the former a Crayola-mohawked, solvent guzzling, war-painted tweaker, and the latter a filth-caked, whimpering, underfed Neanderthal. Skank is the alpha subhuman of the two, twitching and snurfing as he barks orders at his evolutionarily inferior pal. When The Wraith destroys their rogue auto shop with a futuristic shotgun, Gutterboy whines, "Who is that guy, Skank?" His buddy's reply: "I don't know, but whoever he is, he's weird and pissed off!" Skank's hair colors seem to change with his toxic beverage of choice, the mohawk shifting from puce to highlighter green as quickly as you can down a fifth of hydraulic fluid.

A perfectly PG-13 revenge opera, *The Wraith* leaves its mysteries unexplained, replacing solutions with thunderous fiery bursts. No complaints here. Director Marvin was also behind slapstick party comedy *Hamburger: The Motion Picture* released just seven months earlier, giving him a spotless track record as a filmmaker for the entire year of 1986. (ZC)



X: THE UNHEARD MUSIC

Dir. W.T. Morgan / 1986

The life and times of American band X.

An artistically ambitious free-form documentary on the monolithic punk/rock 'n' roll act, as well as a broad time capsule of early '80s Los Angeles. X performs the film's title track with perfectly sloppy intensity before breaking into accounts of how they formed via classified ads and poetry workshops. The members led surprisingly different lives; guitarist Billy Zoom exists in a '50s-inspired suburban rockabilly dream while drummer DJ Bonebrake surrounds himself with instruments in a studio apartment. The group reminisces about their first shows in '78 at punk epicenter The Masque, where graffiti read "HIPPIES GO HOME" and "HIPPIES SUCK." A photomontage recalls the mania of those days, with images of show flyers, early zines, iconic musicians and several airborne showgoers. X vocalist Exene Cervenka takes the viewer on a tour of the Whisky a Go Go's thrashed interiors, and the band's producer Ray Manzarek talks about how he was floored by his first exposure to them. They're shown recording "White Girl" with him, and later in a packed record store, signing copies of their *Under the Big Black Sun* LP. Major label dinosaurs offer up their observations on X's marketability, a sharp contrast to an interview with Slash Records founder Bob Biggs. Mostly, the film acts as a collection of moving snapshots of the band at the height of their popularity, accurately portrayed as one of the most crucial acts on LA's sonic landscape. (*ZC*)

YEAR OF THE DRAGON

Dir. Michael Cimino / 1985

A self-disgusted white man single-handedly takes on an entire ancient culture's rich history of organized crime.

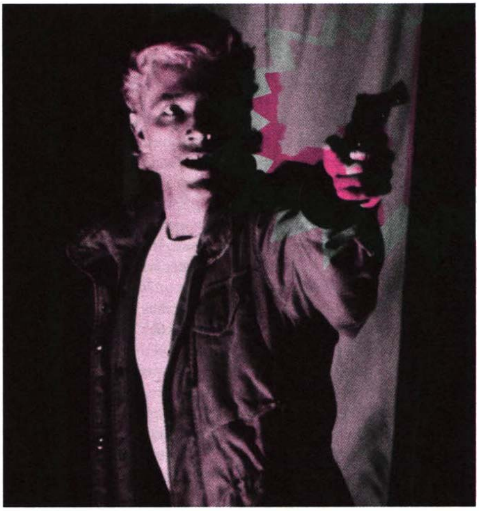
Mickey Rourke stars in Cimino's lesser Asian head wound epic following *The Deer Hunter*. In New York City's Chinatown, gang killings are rampant to the point where major mob families stoop to meeting with police to hammer out a tenuous solution. As squad captain White (Rourke) grinds deeper into the triad underworld, he encounters satin-jacketed assassins, corrupt fellow lawmen and even a red-topped Chinese punk who declares him a fascist. The same character and others like her appear several more times throughout the film; in Chinatown's fresh generation of dope peddlers and extortionists, neon-tinted rooster 'dos are apparently a set standard. The central crimson-cropped punk is only upstaged in one restaurant scene, where two machine gun-toting maniacs provide the film with a vicious, chaotic mass extermination. Realizing he's up again massive odds, White takes on a Chinese rookie partner, creating limitless opportunities for that ol' racist '80s action film banter. (*ZC*)

YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

Dir. Charles Winkler / 1987

A De Niro-obsessed young actor gets knee-deep in shenanigans.

A cornucopia of second-hand embarrassment. Struggling young actor Bronson Green (Jim Youngs) turns to Robert De Niro posters for guidance and maintains an imaginary friendship with the icon, referring to him as "Bobby." The moron even has "Bickle" stenciled on his army jacket. Tired of failing in New York, Bronson decides to sample the failure of Hollywood. He meets comedian Alan King in a cab, but that's as close to fame as his destiny will take him. Desperate to stand out like the wild individuals he sees roaming the California streets, he bleaches his hair and dresses like an inbred kickboxer. Later, he accidentally holds up a surf shop, where he meets charming young socialite Dana (Faith Ford). Her not-as-sweet father Peter Archer (*Benson*'s James Noble) is a producer of religious TV programming who enjoys turning phrases like "leftist pinko commie faggot no-neck Jew." Bronson ends up acting for Mr. Archer's company, but soon learns the ugly truth when his employer chases a black couple from his oceanfront property, yelling, "Niggers on my beach!" while spraying them with a garden hose. In bed with his new racist-spawned girlfriend, Bronson has a nightmare vision of himself in DeNiro's *Taxi Driver* mohawk phase, staring down in harsh disapproval. As time passes, Bronson begins doing televised Christian race war public service announcements despite the fact that his best friend Thatcher (Mykelti Williams) is African-American. Whatta revolting predicament. He later listens to his boss' endless Aryan rants at a private firing range where the paper targets have afros. Archer's flunkies invade Thatcher's house, pour white paint on him and spraypaint "THE WHITE TRUTH" in his living room. When Bronson's charade starts to crumble, he has



Along with religion and death, sex is an indispensable target, and the one Zedd attacks most fiercely. In *Why Do You Exist?* (1998), a curvaceous woman spreads food on her breasts while bandaged people strike poses. *Ecstasy in Entropy* (1999) features Annie Sprinkle stripping for leering old men. The scene eventually melts down into a lewd riot. Truly shocking among his works is *Thrust In Me* (1985), a collaboration with Richard Kern. In it, a woman slashes her wrists in the tub. After she's died, her boyfriend enters the room, uses the toilet and then has sex with her mouth. Zedd plays both roles.

Police State (1987) isn't as vicious or illicit as most of the other films mentioned here, but may be Zedd's best dramatic accomplishment. Based on an actual occurrence in his life, the story follows Zedd being hassled and eventually detained by a manically abusive police force, one of whom is perfectly played by late NYC personality Rockets Redglare. It's a hilarious and legitimately tense 20 minutes of film, and showcases a great talent that has made the lifelong decision to work only on his own terms. *(ZC)*

NICK ZEDD

Director – *THEY EAT SCUM; GEEK MAGGOT BINGO;*
WAR IS MENSTRUAL ENVY; Shorts

DAM: You've said that you had a camera when you were a kid, but did you have the goal of being a filmmaker or did that come after you were exposed to punk?

NZ: I started when I was 12 years old before I moved to New York. My father had an 8mm home movie camera. That's when I started shooting stuff.

So you were just making shorts at home?

Well, actually I did a 15-minute film and then a feature in 8mm when I was in high school. Then I stopped making movies for a while, but became interested in doing it again in 1977.

And at that point you were already living in New York?

Right. I moved to New York in 1976.

So, what was going on in the punk scene that inspired you to make films again?

There were all these bands playing at CBGB's and Max's Kansas City that were really great and there was an actual punk counterculture happening. The DIY aesthetic was very inspiring to me. I felt like anyone could do anything and we weren't as inundated with the dominant culture. It felt like there was nothing to hold me back, which actually hasn't changed; I'm still making movies that way.

It's exciting to be talking to someone who's still actively doing stuff. So many people we've interviewed got disgusted with everything for one reason or another.

So you were re-inspired after you'd been living in New York for a year and that's when you started putting together what became *They Eat Scum*?

Yeah.

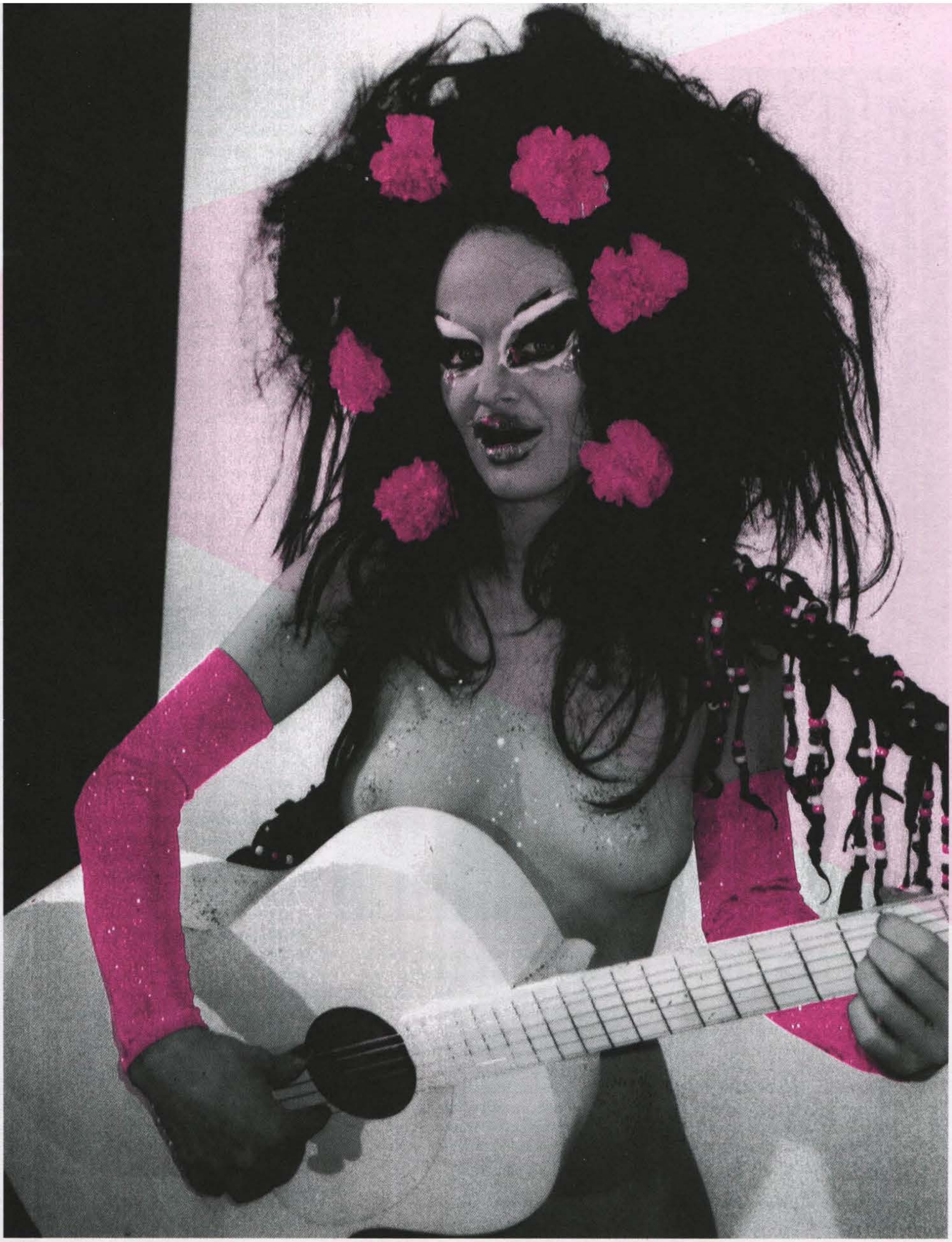
That movie has a lot going on so I'm just gonna start by asking: What was the genesis of that story?

I was aware of the fact that there were these exploitation films made about juvenile delinquency back in the '50s and '60s. I guess it was because the media at the time liked to exaggerate and distort the dangers of youth culture and I felt like a similar situation was happening with punk in '77. But the media was ignoring it and there seemed to be a blackout regarding the dissemination of music—it wasn't getting played on the radio—and there was hardly any coverage on the television or in the news. It got more attention in England, I guess, with the Sex Pistols on the *Bill Grundy Show*. Shock value was an important element with punk, which I think was based on the complacency of the rock culture at the time, which was controlled by the '60s generation who were the people in power controlling the media and the record industry, and they'd made the decision that the counterculture had ended with Woodstock. In reality there was a genuine counterculture—punk—that was a reaction to all those dinosaur bands that were getting all the airtime. I really liked these low-budget, quickie juvenile delinquency exploitation movies like *Riot on Sunset Strip* and I wondered why nobody had made a movie satirizing the dominant culture's opinion of punk rock.

Personally, I was one of the first punk rockers in Brooklyn or New York, and I was attacked on the street. I was physically assaulted just because of the way I looked. It was considered so shocking. Just wearing leather or having safety pins or torn clothes or hand-drawn images or spiky hair with dye, it was considered an outrage at the time. It was strange because with the hippies it was about freedom of expression and non-conformity, but then it became so ossified in the dominant culture that people were shocked by anyone who didn't conform. It made them angry. So I thought that I would like to make a low-budget comedy shot in Super 8 that would exaggerate the demonization of punk rockers, and that's when I wrote the screenplay for this feature called *They Eat Scum*, and I used Donna Death as the star. What I was actually hoping at the time was that the punk movement—well, it wasn't much of a movement—but I was hoping punk rock would become popular and successful and overthrow the established values and that music would get played on the radio and the TV and people would change the way they looked. But that didn't happen at all.

They Eat Scum was intentionally transgressive and provocative but with humor. There weren't that many punks around, but the few I could find I put in the movie.

That movie has so many storylines and kind of jumps into a science-fiction



documentaries, but dramas—and this was the only time he acted zany in a movie. How did you get him to do that?

I can't remember how I met him, but I gave him a script and he loved it. He said he wanted to do it and we did it. I think I had to pay him $50 a day or something. During the making of it, in between shooting, he'd done some concert and Rockets Redglare got in a fight with him and fell on top of him and his ribs got broken. That resulted in him showing up on set with these bandages on his ribs that you can see sometimes underneath his outfit. But he gave a really good performance.

You've done very few features since that time... is it just that it's difficult to take on a longer project?

It's mainly because of money; when I start something, money runs out and it becomes a short film. When I was with Reverend Jen who was the star of *Electra Elf*, the TV series that I shot, she wrote a screenplay for a feature we were supposed to make in which she would play a lady wrestler. I can't remember why we didn't make it.

I made this movie called *Lord of the Cockrings*, which was about 30 minutes. And the next one I did was called *I Was a Quality of Life Violation* and that was in 2003. It seemed like that took so long to make; for some reason it took a whole year to finish that one and it seemed like we were able to make the short films easier like just a half-hour long, so we thought, why don't we do like a TV series about a superhero and her sidekick, a talking Chihuahua. She wrote scripts and I wrote scripts and we ended up doing many episodes. It's gonna come out as a box set.

The movies I made in the '90s were more experimental and closer to painting where I was more concerned with texture and light and less narrative. But then I went back to a narrative direction in the early 2000s, which is more similar to the early stuff I did.

Do you have favorites from each era?

Yeah. Like *Police State*, I'm pretty pleased with. And *Thrust in Me*. And *The Bogus Man*. And a lot of the episodes of *Electra Elf*.

How'd you get roped into acting more?

I didn't really have an interest in acting. I was always more interested in writing and directing. But then Ela Troyana wanted me to be in some movie called *The Bubble People* that she put Donna Death in, and Jack Smith was in that one. I refused. I had no interest in even doing interviews on television. I was very shy. Then she decided to do this movie called *Totem of the Depraved* and it was a film that didn't have a script, but it was supposed to be scenes where I would be a hustler or some guy surviving on the streets by seducing people. I think it was her sort of romanticized vision of who I was, and it created this myth around me, which wasn't entirely true. It was like a cartoon exaggeration of my life. But, at the time, I did actually move in with this girl who I met on the street and she was in the movie as well and it was basically improvised.

I did a scene with a girl I met, who was this punk girl, she was very fat and she didn't care and she was very outrageous looking and beautiful. I think the day I met her, I talked her into appearing in the film and I seduced her with the camera rolling and tried to get her to take her clothes off, but she wouldn't do it because she was a virgin. I did a scene with Phoebe Legere who was less inhibited. That scene I scripted. It was pretty good. It was a comedy. I also appeared nude in this scene, which was the first time I did that. I felt at the time that if you're afraid to do something you should do it—that's reason enough to do something—I was just shy and afraid of being photographed or filmed. She paid me by buying me a pair of pants because I was so broke: I was walking around with these torn-up black jeans. The director had like no ideas at all, and I said, "If you're having me seduce these girls, why don't you have me do it with a guy? Might as well go all out." So I did a scene with this guy James Richardson who's really charismatic and funny.

After that Richard Kern and Tommy Turncoat started making films in Super 8. I'd been waiting for years for there to be other people doing similar kinds of movies as me. Nobody was doing anything like I was doing in New York really. I was the only one doing this stuff, making these sort of shock-value comedies. Then when they started, we were all doing these Super 8 films on the Lower East Side and we were broke, but it didn't cost much so we'd share the cameras and the lights and the equipment and act in each other's films. I did that movie *Thrust in Me*, which came out really good. I co-directed it with Richard Kern and storyboarded it and edited it with him. That's when I started doing the *Underground Film Bulletin*, which was a fanzine that covered the activities of the underground filmmakers in New York at the time; people who were not written about at all in any of the magazines or newspapers, and there was no Internet back then either. It created attention, I guess. I used different pseudonyms to create the impression that there was actually a critic who appreciated what we were doing, but in reality no critic ever appreciated anything we did...to this day. I feel it's a sign that what we were doing is still important because it still threatens the dominant culture, apparently. It takes years for someone to be discovered.

JANET CUNNINGHAM

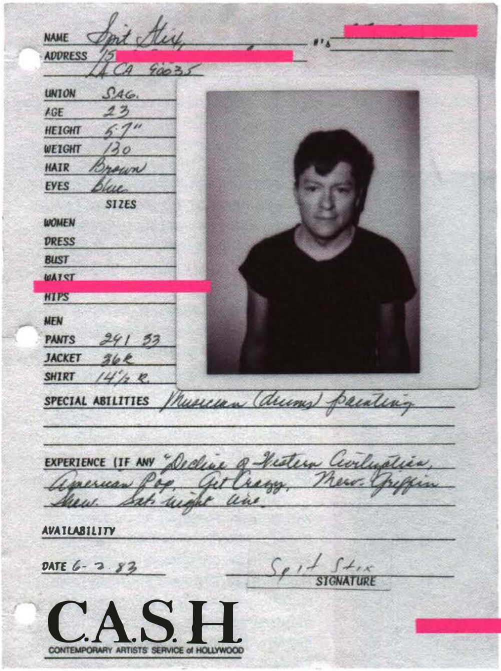
Screen Punk Casting Specialist

As we tore through endless videotapes in our research, one recurring screen credit caught my eye: "Janet Cunningham – Casting." As often as not, when we struck punk gold, her name would scroll by shortly after. Clearly, this woman could be a major resource for information and anecdotes, having supplied new wave human décor to seemingly countless '80s films. From studio sci-fi epic Blade Runner *to no-budget comedy* Hollywood Zap *to undisputed teen classic* Valley Girl, *Janet and her company CASH had been responsible for supplying filmmakers with a steady supply of thrashers, rock warriors, teenage ragers and rainbow-tinted roadmeat.*

After some detective work, I found she was more than happy to assist. Turns out she'd been the first to cast actual punks in major Hollywood films, providing semi-reliable work for the era's unemployable culture shockers. She'd stepped out of the industry some years ago but maintained her files—and friendships—from CASH's heyday.

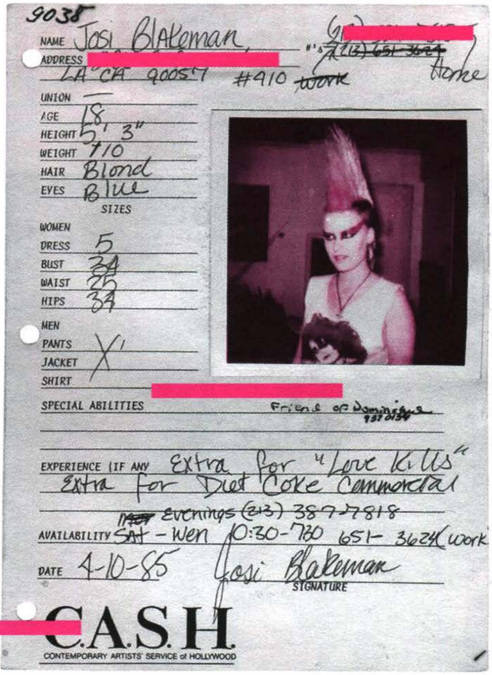
I was invited out to Janet's home in Silver Lake, CA, where we spent a full day digging in boxes and tracing back through LA's movie punk lineage. Later that night, she threw a house party attended by dozens of actors and extras from the company's roster. Familiar faces from Suburbia *and* Get Crazy *swapped reminiscences with former post-apocalyptic warriors.*

Not only was Janet a great host and an incredible assistance, she took the time to share some of her personal punk history:



NAME Spit Stix, #'s [redacted]
ADDRESS [redacted]
LA CA 90035
UNION SAG.
AGE 23
HEIGHT 5'7"
WEIGHT 130
HAIR Brown
EYES Blue
SIZES
WOMEN
DRESS
BUST
WAIST [redacted]
HIPS
MEN
PANTS 29 / 33
JACKET 36 R
SHIRT 14½ R.
SPECIAL ABILITIES Musician (drums) painting
EXPERIENCE (IF ANY "Decline of Western Civilization", American Pop, Get Crazy, Merv Griffin Show, Sat. night live.
AVAILABILITY
DATE 6-2-83
Spit Stix
SIGNATURE

C.A.S.H.
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' SERVICE of HOLLYWOOD



9038
NAME Josi Blakeman, #'s [redacted] ~~(213) 651-3624~~ Home
ADDRESS [redacted]
LA CA 90057 #410 ~~work~~
UNION —
AGE 18
HEIGHT 5' 3"
WEIGHT 110
HAIR Blond
EYES Blue
SIZES
WOMEN
DRESS 5
BUST 34
WAIST 25
HIPS 34
MEN
PANTS X
JACKET
SHIRT
[redacted]
SPECIAL ABILITIES Friend of Dominique 937 0134
EXPERIENCE (IF ANY Extra for "Love Kills" Extra for Diet Coke Commercial
~~Mon~~ Evenings (213) 387-7818
AVAILABILITY ~~SAT~~ - Wen 10:30-7:30 651-3624 (work
DATE 4-10-85 Josi Blakeman
SIGNATURE

C.A.S.H.
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' SERVICE of HOLLYWOOD

DAM: What does CASH stand for, and what were its origins?

JC: "Contemporary Artists Space of Hollywood." I had just moved from New Orleans where the Contemporary Art Center was the hot spot for everything new. Reagan changed the donations to the arts from 60- or 80-% to 100%. I decided to start something that would be able to get donations for musicians, filmmakers, artists and everyone creative and provide a place where they could show their work. Other names included: Contemporary Acting School of Hollywood...Completely Absolutely Styling and Happening... Center for the Advancement of Skinhead Hobos...I can't remember the others, but there were many.

What was the earliest project you cast for?

Café Flesh. The producer and director came to CASH one evening to solicit my help. The script supervisor Ruben Masters was a friend of mine, and a regular CASH patron. They needed extras to play the "negatives," who were the people that went to Café Flesh to watch the "positives" have sex. We worked for free, but we ate, drank and had fun. One night we all went to Oki Dog. Andy Warhol was there and took my picture. I had him autograph my jacket that I was wearing in the film. It was published in *Rolling Stone*. Quite an exciting weekend.

You were deeply involved in the punk scene, specifically. How would you recruit the actors/extras?

I knew pretty much everybody and they all needed a job. Having a foot-high mohawk wasn't in the dress code for most businesses. People came to me and they brought their friends.

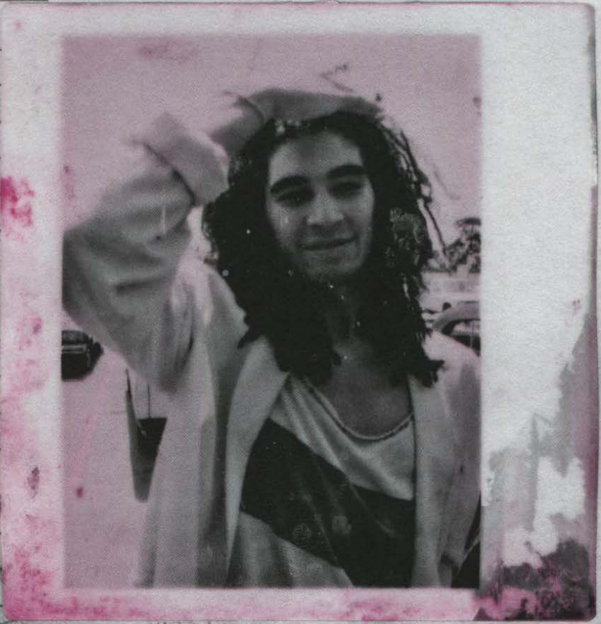
One of my first jobs was a film called *Get Crazy*. I met Mary Santiago of Star Casting when I went with a bunch of my punk friends to an extras audition. She was looking for lots of people and I told her I could help her out. She gave me vouchers and paid me 5% for everyone I brought in. So, I was accidentally in the business. My next film was *Valley Girl*. From then on, I was the "punk rock casting person." I never had any competition.

9116

NAME Pat Bulsara

#'s [redacted] ~~6546496~~

ADDRESS [redacted] St.
L.A. Ca. 90035



UNION

AGE 23

HEIGHT 6'0"

WEIGHT 145

HAIR Brn.

EYES Brn.

SIZES

WOMEN

DRESS

BUST

WAIST

HIPS

MEN

PANTS 30/

JACKET 38

SHIRT Med.

SPECIAL ABILITIES Guitar

EXPERIENCE (IF ANY Short Cut, Bladerunner, Jeckle & Hyde, Decline, Get Crazy, Echo Park, Nomads, Girls,

AVAILABILITY

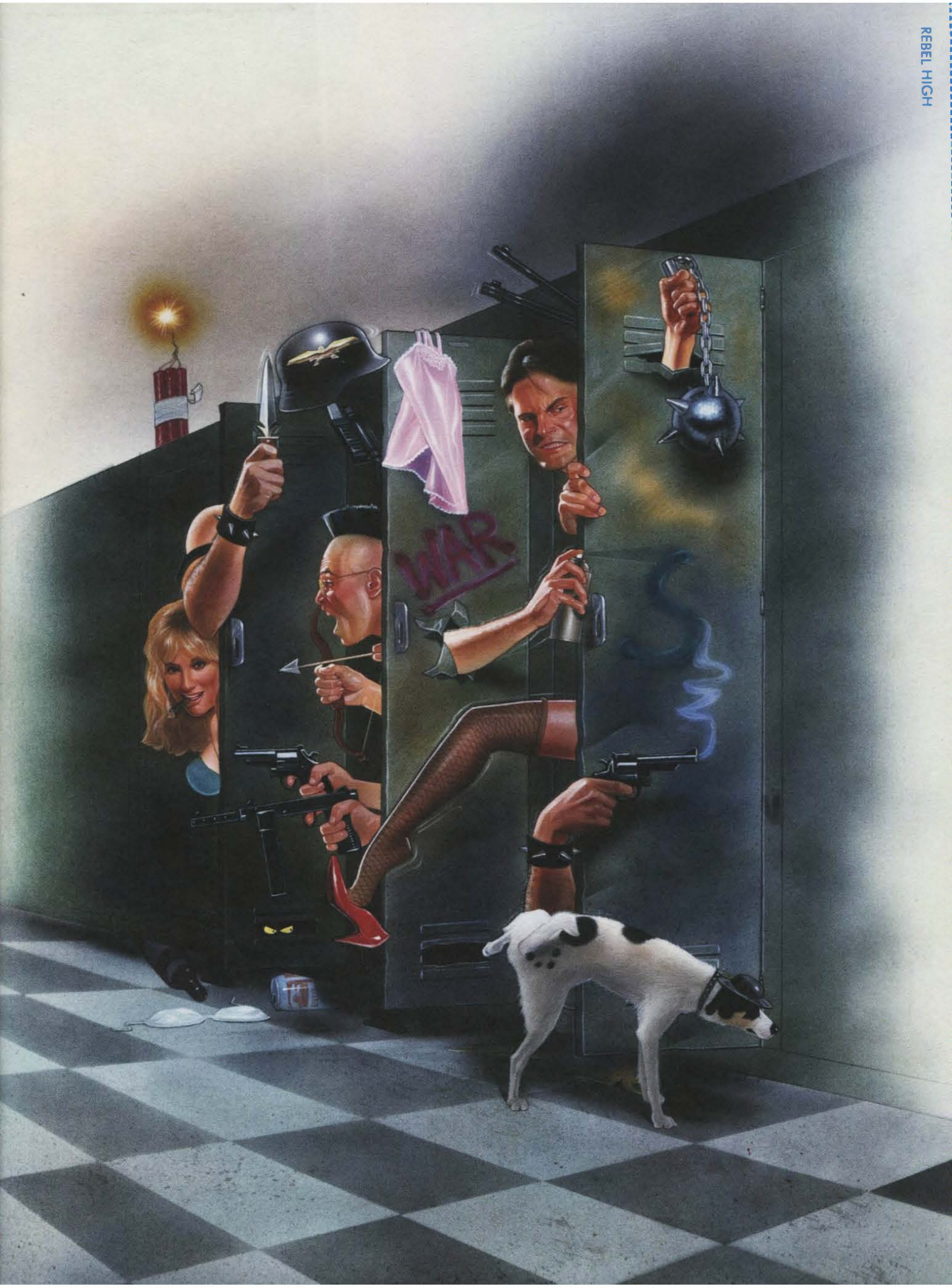
DATE 6-13-84

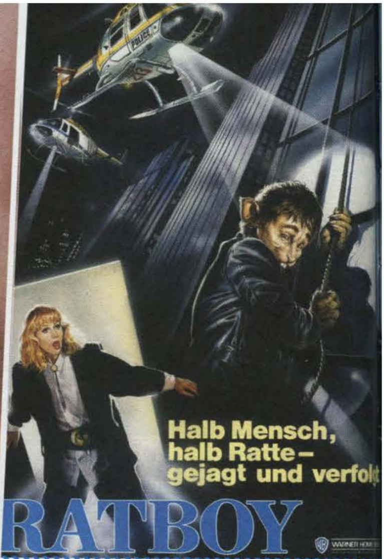
[redacted]
SIGNATURE

C.A.S.H.
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS' SERVICE of HOLLYWOOD

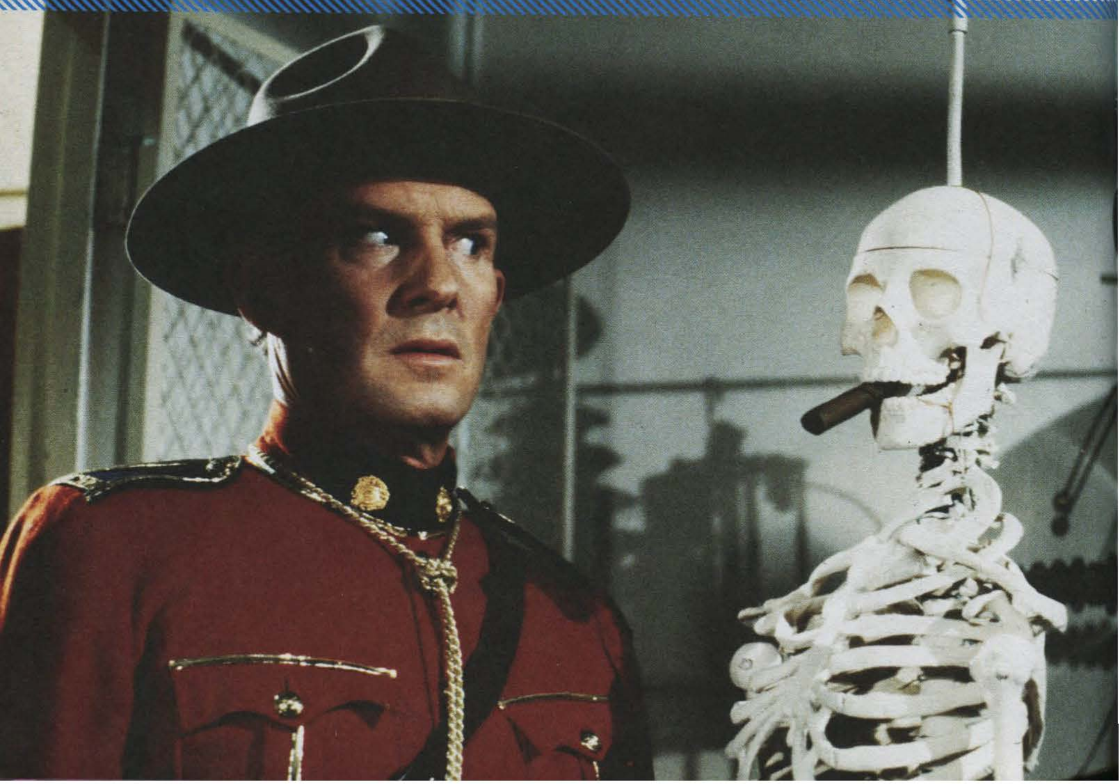
IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS, CONDEMNATIONS
OR HAVE FOUND A MOVIE PUNK THAT WE MISSED
DESPITE OUR EXHAUSTIVE RESEARCH, PLEASE
CONTACT THE EDITORS OF THIS BOOK AT:

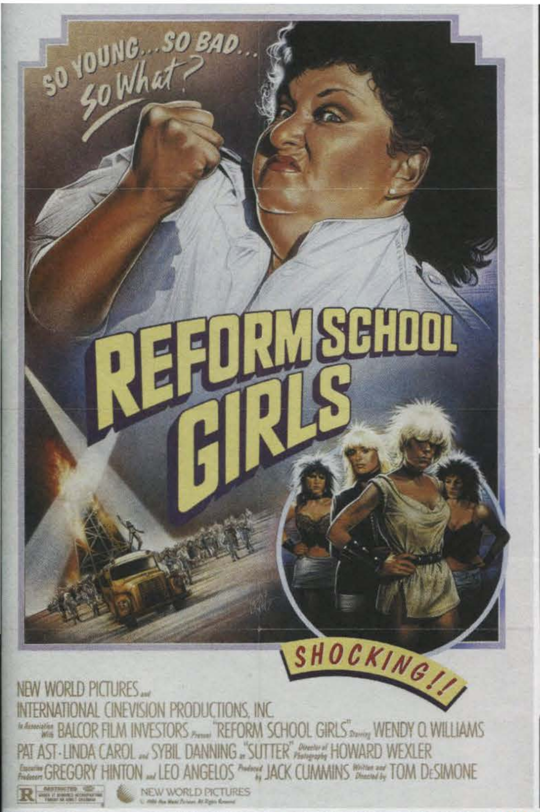
ZACK@PUNKSONFILM.COM
BRYAN@PUNKSONFILM.COM


WAR


Halb Mensch,
halb Ratte –
gejagt und verfol
RATBOY
WARNER HOME

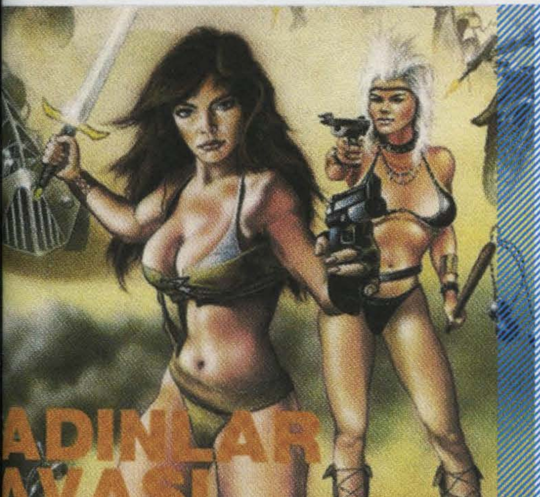
Clockwise from top left: PUNK ROCK director Carter Stevens; RATBOY; PANDEMONIUM



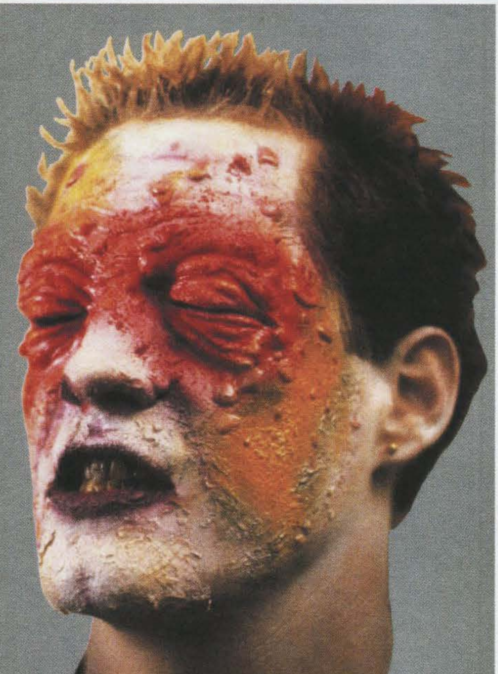

SO YOUNG... SO BAD... So What?
REFORM SCHOOL GIRLS
SHOCKING!!
NEW WORLD PICTURES and
INTERNATIONAL CINEVISION PRODUCTIONS, INC.
In Association With BALCOR FILM INVESTORS Present "REFORM SCHOOL GIRLS" Starring WENDY O. WILLIAMS
PAT AST · LINDA CAROL and SYBIL DANNING as "SUTTER" Director of Photography HOWARD WEXLER
Executive Producers GREGORY HINTON and LEO ANGELOS Produced by JACK CUMMINS Written and Directed by TOM DeSIMONE
R
NEW WORLD PICTURES

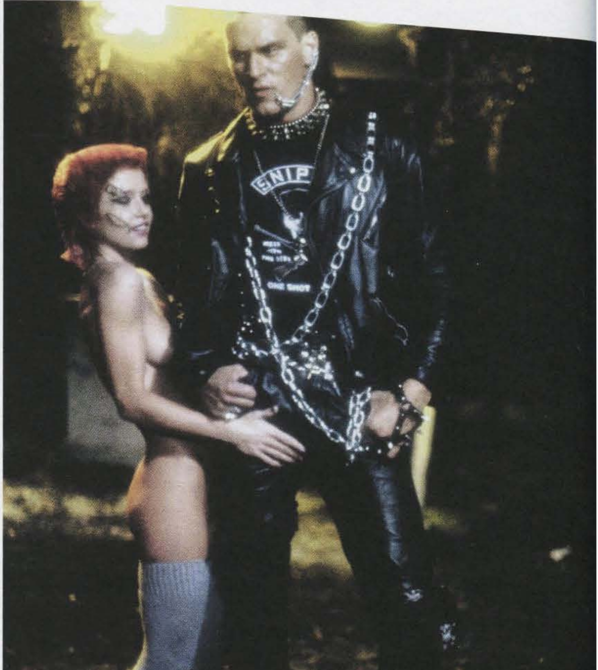
SLAVERY ABOLISHED

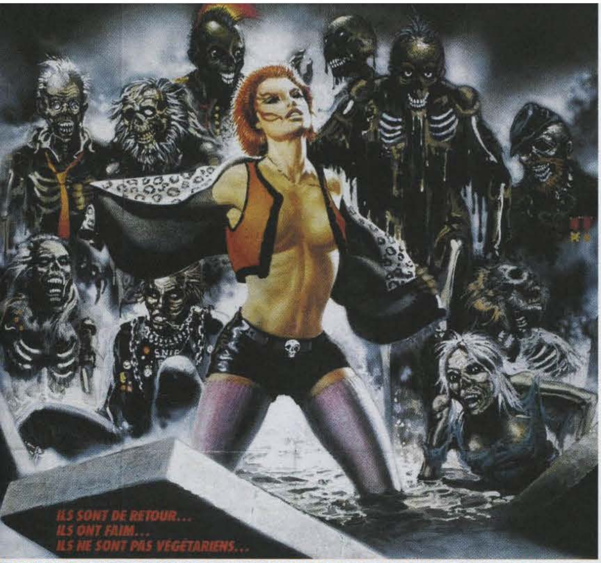
TEAM #1
TEAM
TEAM

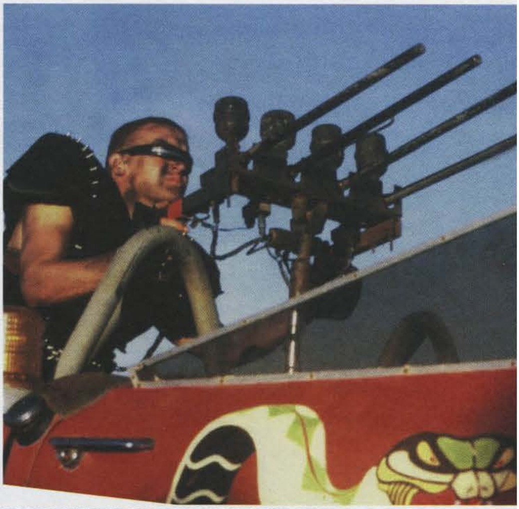

ADINLAR
AVAŞI

Clockwise from top left: REFORM SCHOOL GIRLS; THE PARTY ANIMAL; POLICE ACADEMY 2; PHOENIX THE WARRIOR

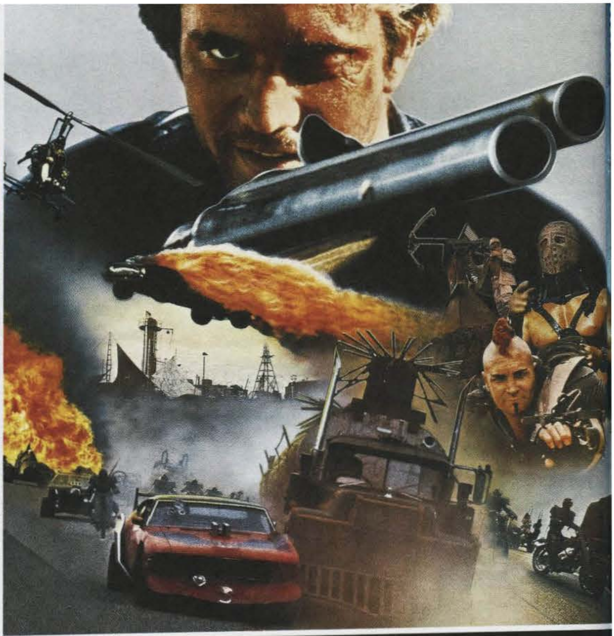





ILS SONT DE RETOUR...
ILS ONT FAIM...
ILS NE SONT PAS VEGETARIENS...



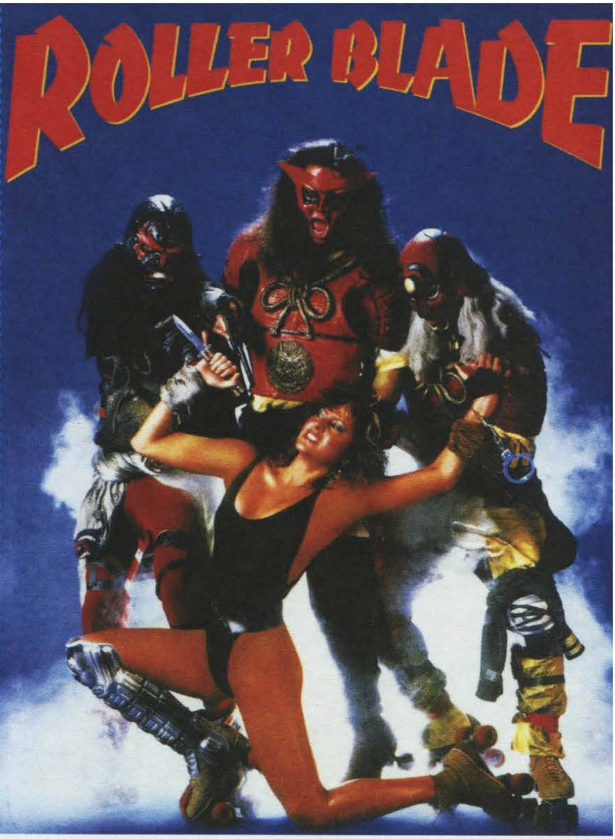
Opposite and above left: RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD;
Above right and below: THE ROAD WARRIOR

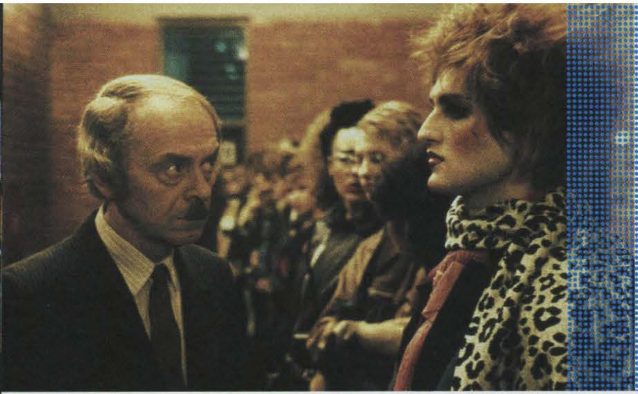


Clockwise from top left: THE RUNNIN' KIND; THE ROAD WARRIOR; ROBOCOP; RUN, CHRISSIE, RUN

DETROIT
POLICE

Right: ROLLER BLADE; Below: ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL


ROLLER BLADE



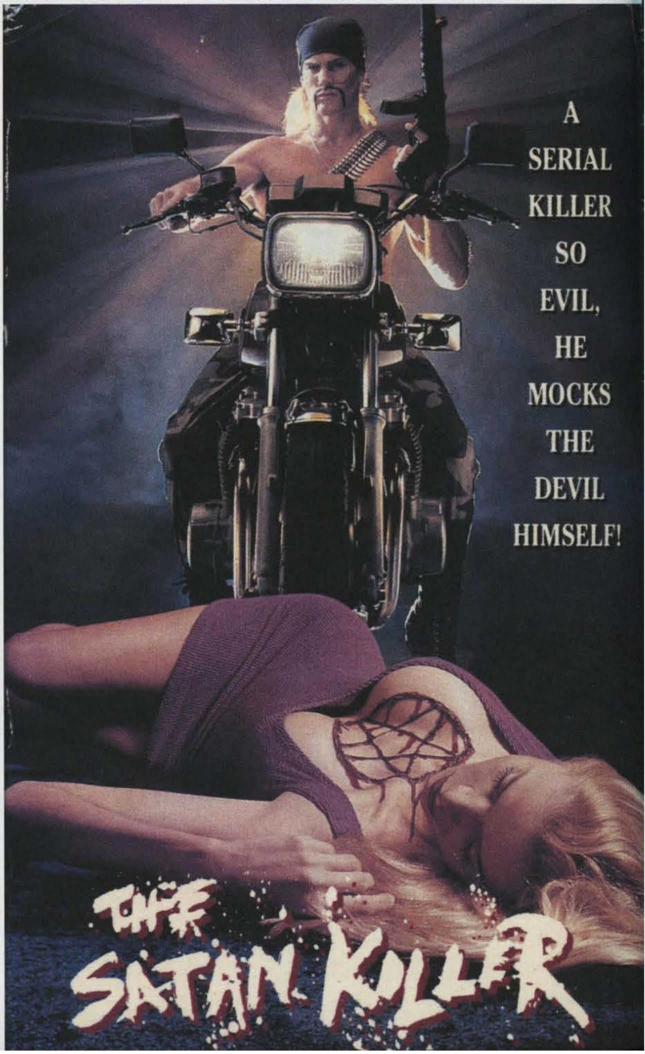
Clockwise from left: STRANGLER VS. STRANGLER; THE SATAN KILLER; RUDE BOY; ROMPER STOMPER

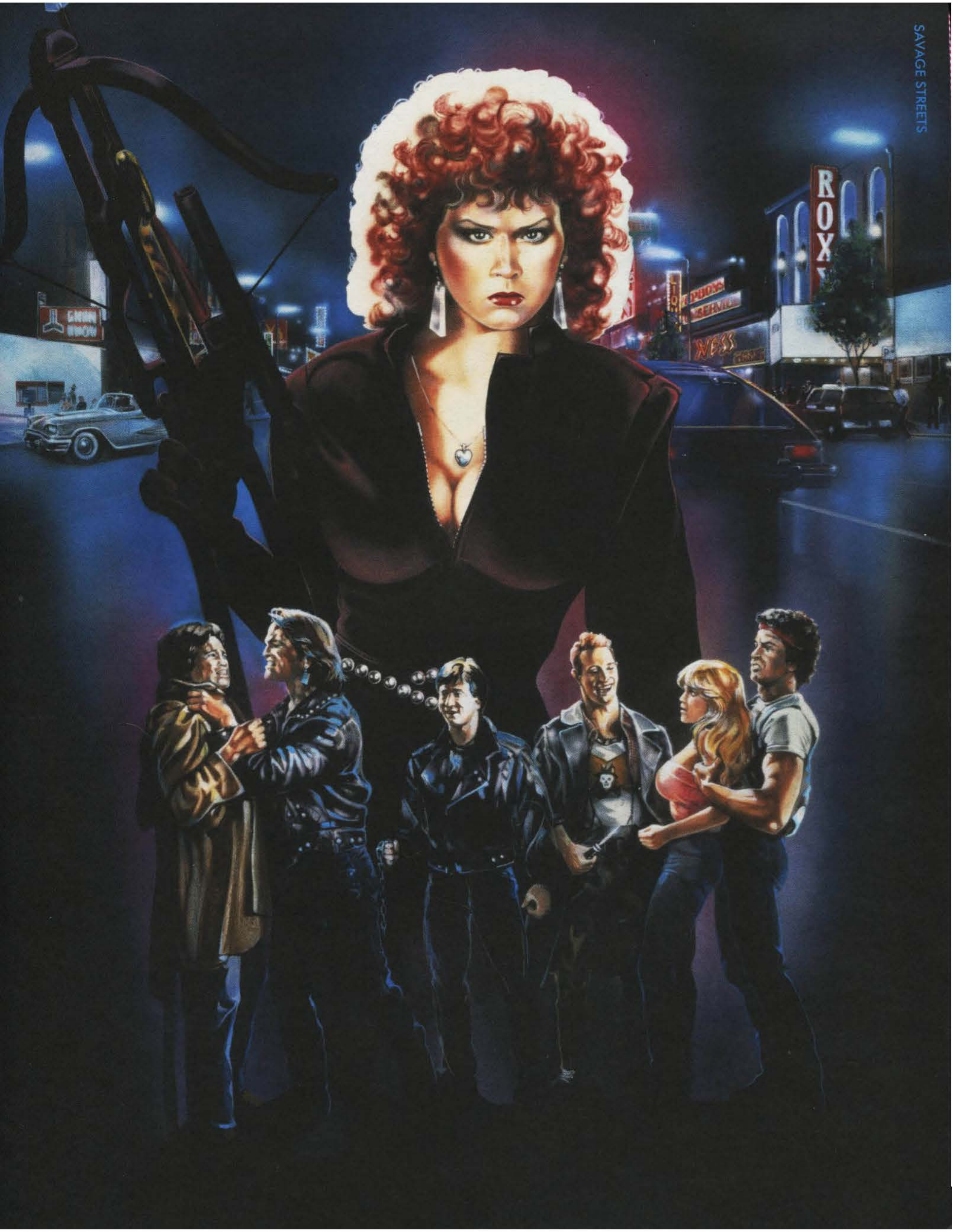
I'm so Bored with the U.S.A
Yankee detectives are always on the TV,
'Cos killers in America
Work seven days a week.

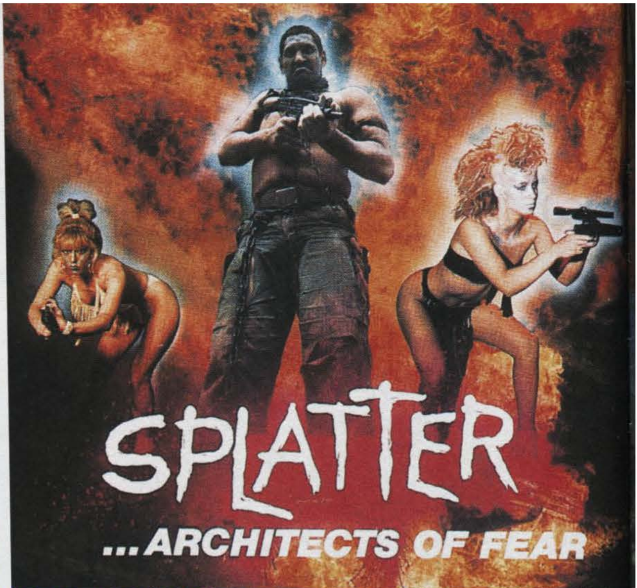
I'm so bored with the U.S.A.,
I'm so bored with the U.S.A.,
Yeah what can I do?

Yankee stars and stripes,
Let's print the Watergate Tapes,
I'll salute the New Wave,
I hope nobody escapes.

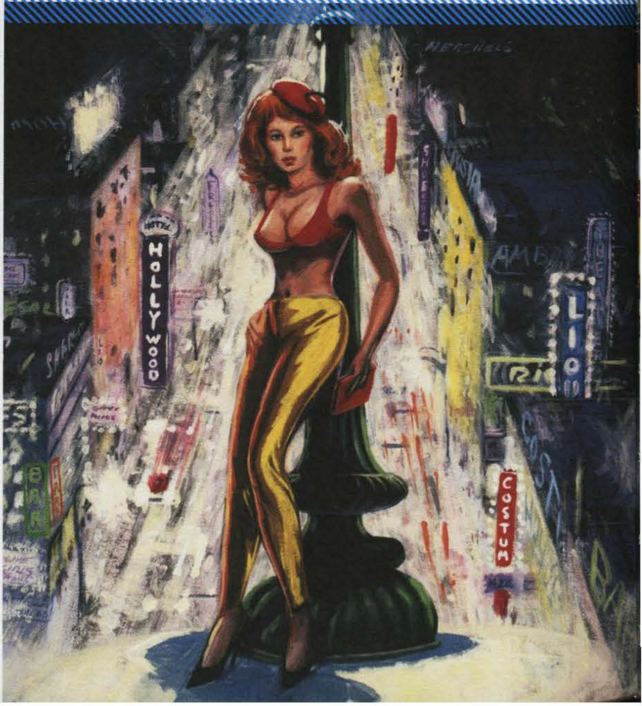
I'm so bored with the U.S.A.,
I'm so bored with the U.S.A.,
Yeah what can I do?

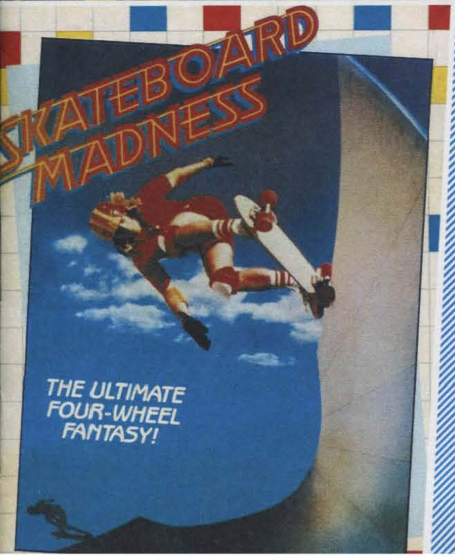

A SERIAL KILLER SO EVIL, HE MOCKS THE DEVIL HIMSELF!
THE SATAN KILLER


ROX
SERVICE

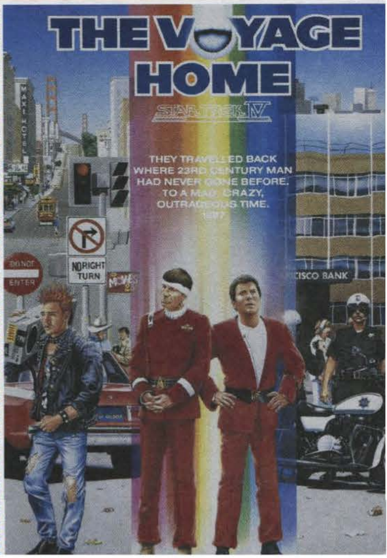

SPLATTER
...ARCHITECTS OF FEAR

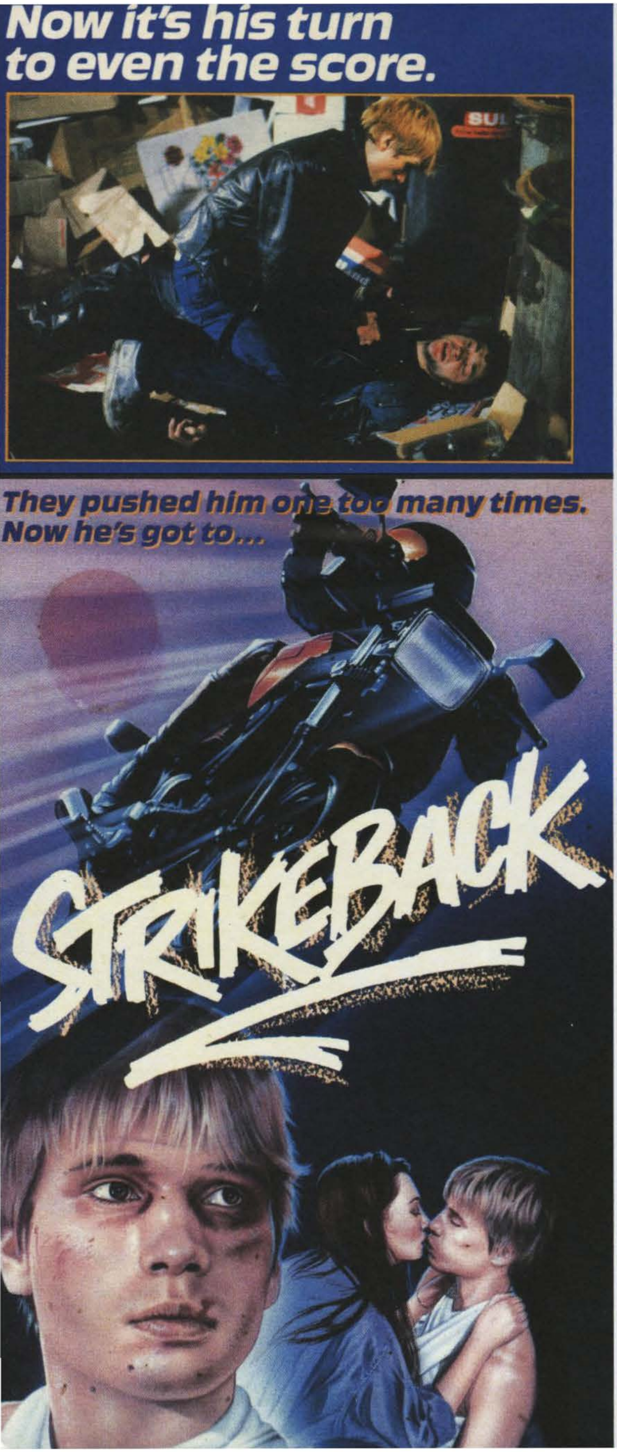
Left: SID AND NANCY; Above: SPLATTER; Below: SCARRED

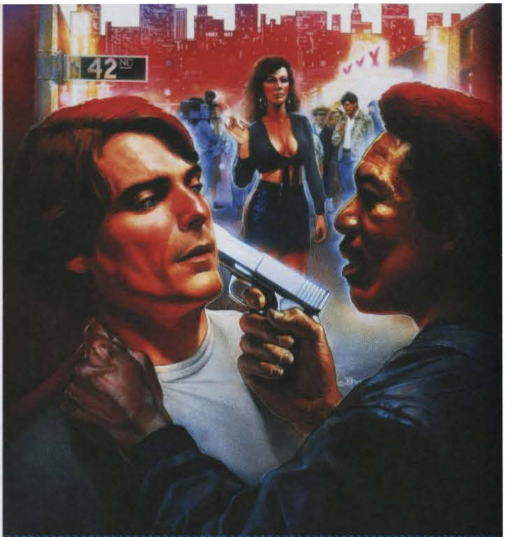

HOTEL
HOLLYWOOD
LIO
BAR
COSTUM


SKATEBOARD MADNESS
THE ULTIMATE FOUR-WHEEL FANTASY!

Above: SKINHEADS; Right: STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME; Left: SKATEBOARD MADNESS

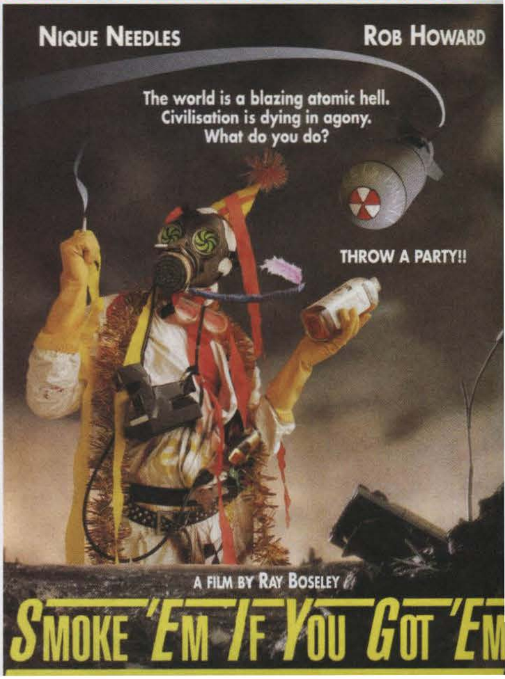

THE VOYAGE HOME
STAR TREK IV
THEY TRAVELLED BACK WHERE 23RD CENTURY MAN HAD NEVER GONE BEFORE. TO A MAD, CRAZY, OUTRAGEOUS TIME.
NO RIGHT TURN
DO NOT ENTER
CISCO BANK


Now it's his turn
to even the score.
They pushed him one too many times.
Now he's got to...
STRIKEBACK



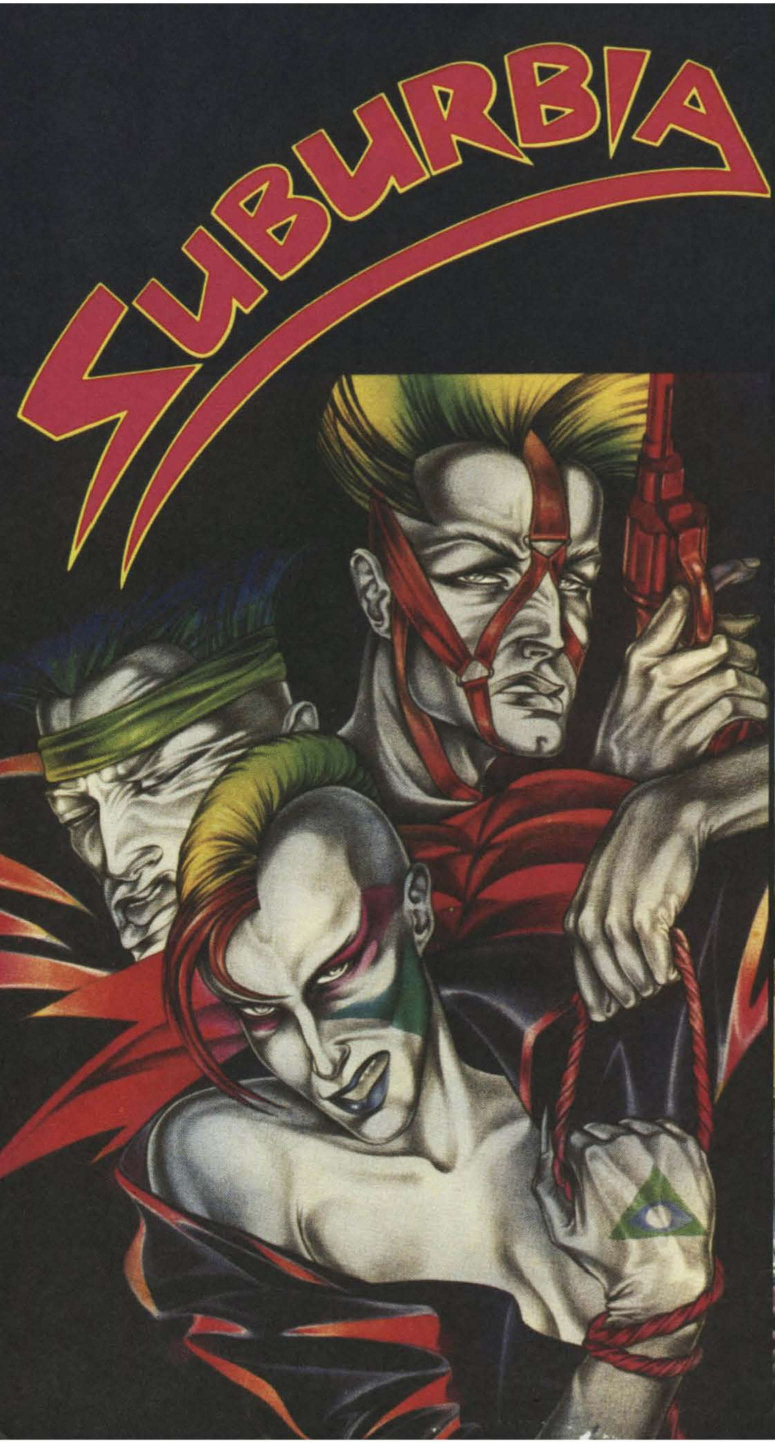
Clockwise from left: STRIKEBACK; STREET SMART; SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM

Opposite Page: SUBURBIA


NIQUE NEEDLES
ROB HOWARD
The world is a blazing atomic hell.
Civilisation is dying in agony.
What do you do?
THROW A PARTY!!
A FILM BY RAY BOSELEY
SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM

RISE

T.R.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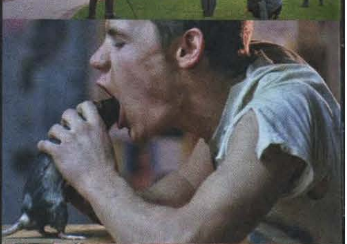
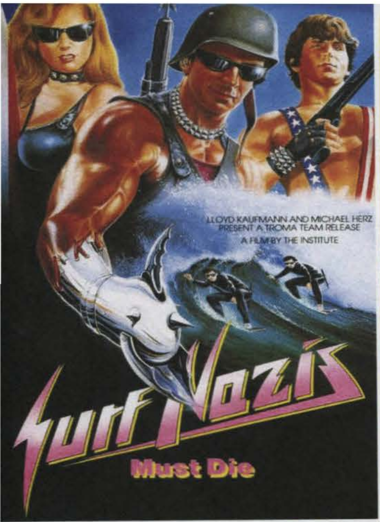
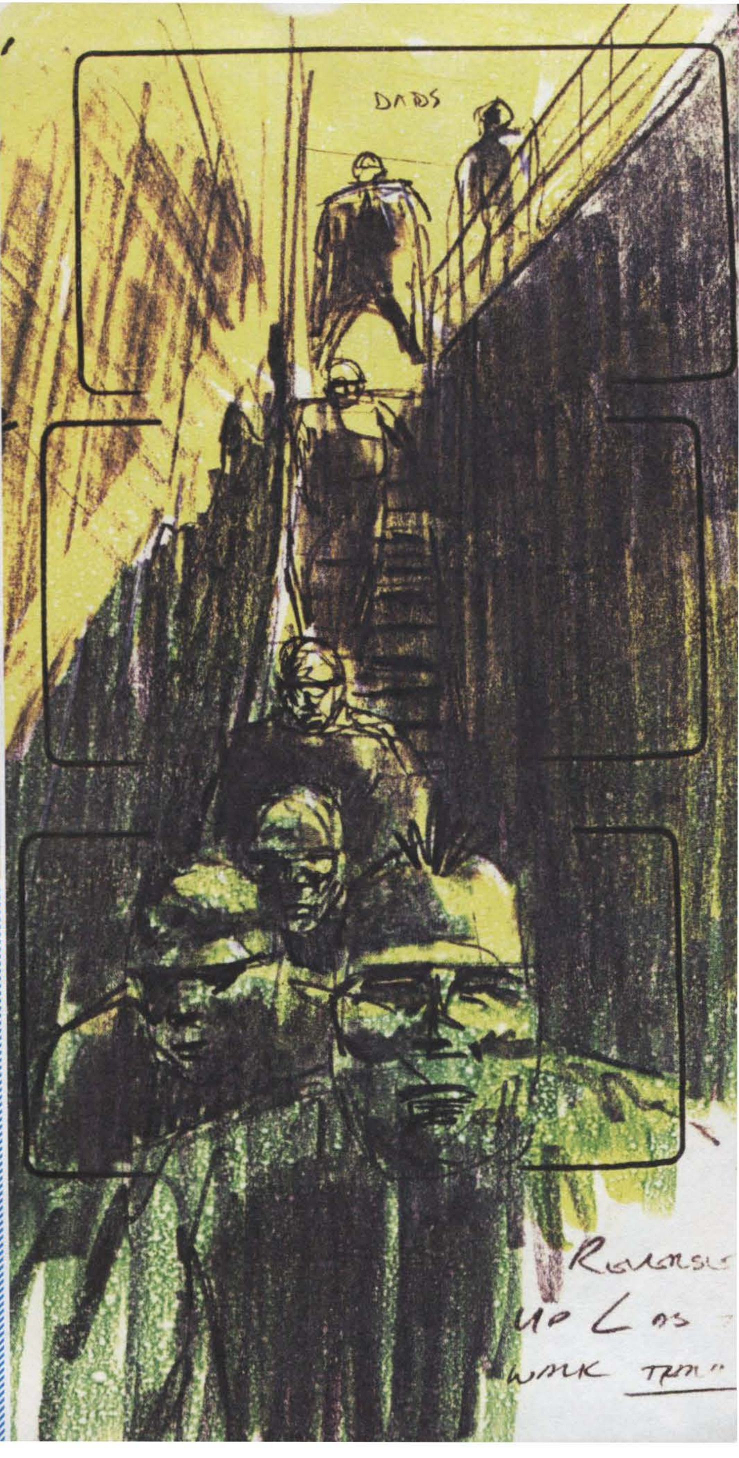


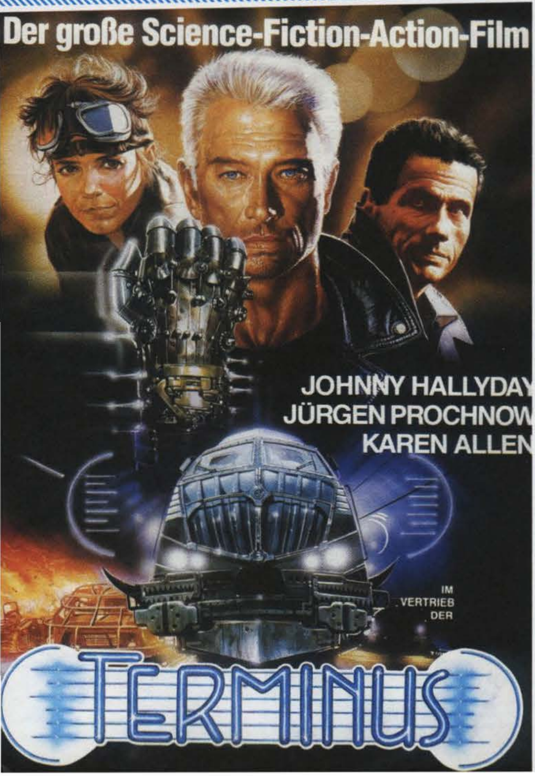

LLOYD KAUFMANN AND MICHAEL HERZ
PRESENT A TROMA TEAM RELEASE
A FILM BY THE INSTITUTE
Surf Nazis
Must Die

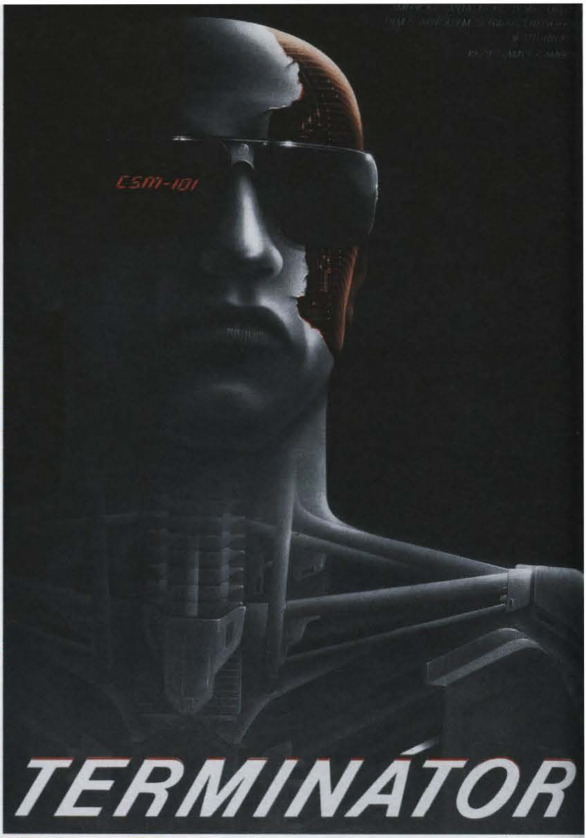

DADS
Reverse
up L as
walk [illegible]

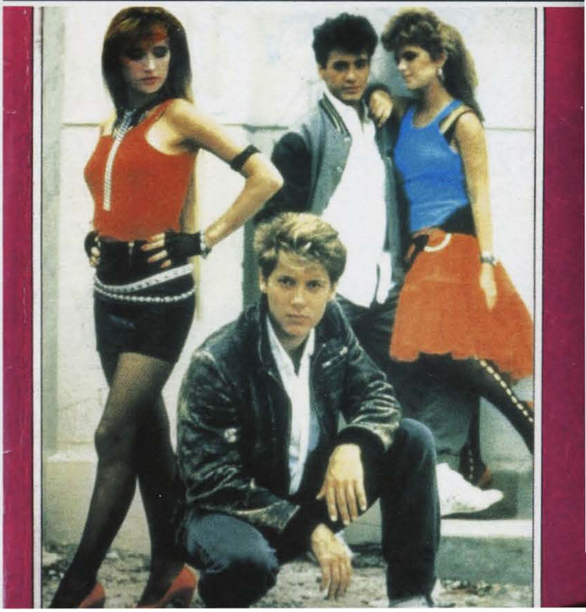
Opposite page: SUBURBIA

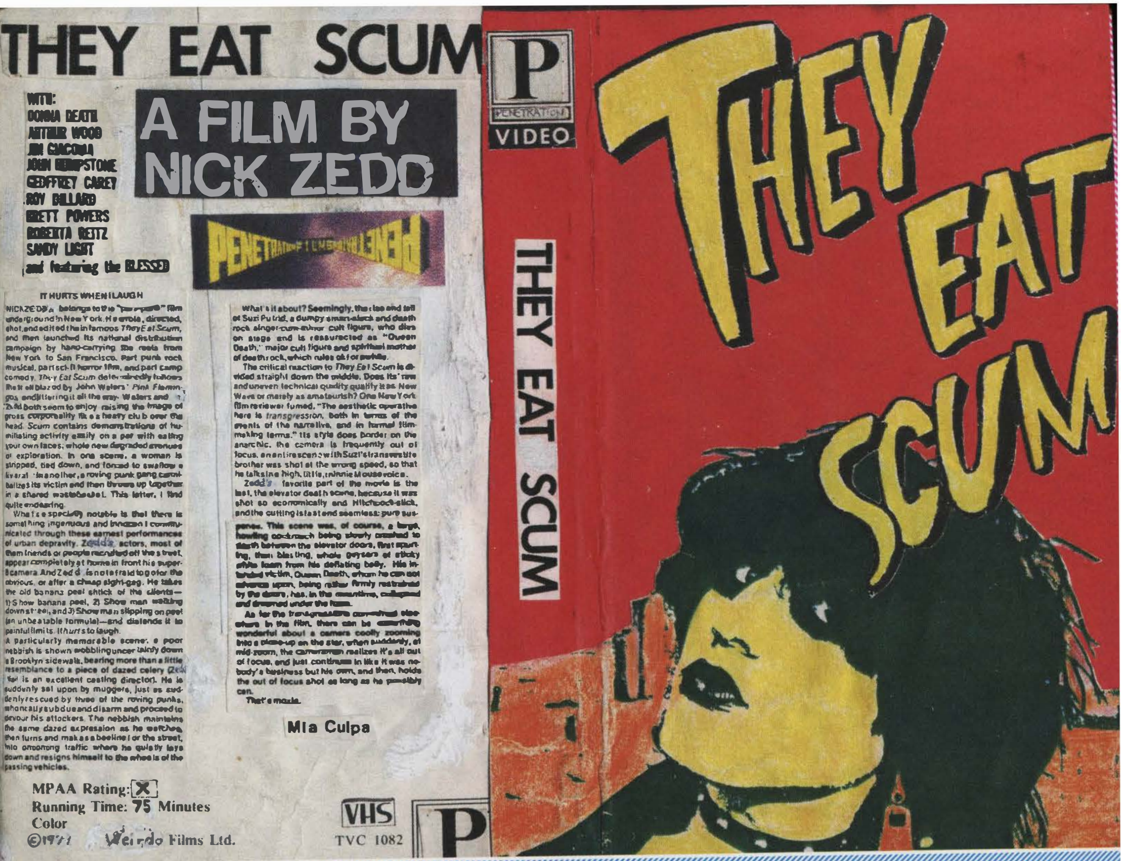
This page, clockwise from top left: SURF NAZIS MUST DIE; SURF II storyboard art; SURF II

Clockwise from top left: TCHAO PANTIN; THE TERMINATOR; TUFF TURF; TERMINUS


Der große Science-Fiction-Action-Film
JOHNNY HALLYDA
JÜRGEN PROCHNOW
KAREN ALLEN
IM VERTRIEB DER
TERMINUS


CSM-101
TERMINATOR





THEY EAT SCUM

WITH:
DONNA DEATH
ARTHUR WOOD
JIM GIACOMA
JOHN HEMPSTONE
GEOFFREY CAREY
ROY BILLARD
BRETT POWERS
ROBERTA REITZ
SANDY LIGHT
and featuring the BLESSED

A FILM BY
NICK ZEDD

IT HURTS WHEN I LAUGH

NICK ZEDD belongs to the "[illegible]" film underground in New York. He wrote, directed, shot, and edited the infamous *They Eat Scum*, and then launched its national distribution campaign by hand-carrying the reels from New York to San Francisco. Part punk rock musical, part sci-fi horror film, and part camp comedy, *They Eat Scum* deliberately follows the trail blazed by John Waters' *Pink Flamingos*, and glittering it all the way. Waters and Zedd both seem to enjoy raising the image of gross corporeality like a heavy club over the head. *Scum* contains demonstrations of humiliating activity easily on a par with eating your own faces; whole new degraded avenues of exploration. In one scene, a woman is stripped, tied down, and forced to swallow a live rat; in another, a roving punk gang cannibalizes its victim and then throws up together in a shared wastebasket. This latter, I find quite endearing.

What is especially notable is that there is something ingenuous and innocent communicated through these earnest performances of urban depravity. Zedd's actors, most of them friends or people recruited off the street, appear completely at home in front his super-8 camera. And Zedd is not afraid to go for the obvious, or after a cheap sight-gag. He takes the old banana peel shtick of the silents—1) Show banana peel, 2) Show man walking down street, and 3) Show man slipping on peel (an unbeatable formula)—and distends it to painful limits. *It hurts to laugh.*

A particularly memorable scene: a poor nebbish is shown wobbling uncertainly down a Brooklyn sidewalk, bearing more than a little resemblance to a piece of dazed celery (Zedd is an excellent casting director). He is suddenly set upon by muggers, just as suddenly rescued by three of the roving punks, who tactically subdue and disarm and proceed to devour his attackers. The nebbish maintains the same dazed expression as he watches, then turns and makes a beeline for the street, into oncoming traffic where he quietly lays down and resigns himself to the wheels of the passing vehicles.

What's it about? Seemingly, the rise and fall of Suzi Putrid, a dumpy [illegible] and death rock singer-cum-[illegible] cult figure, who dies on stage and is resurrected as "Queen Death," major cult figure and spiritual mother of death rock, which rules ok for awhile.

The critical reaction to *They Eat Scum* is divided straight down the middle. Does its' raw and uneven technical quality qualify it as New Wave or merely as amateurish? One New York film reviewer fumed, "The aesthetic operative here is *transgression*, both in terms of the events of the narrative, and in formal filmmaking terms." Its style does border on the anarchic, the camera is frequently out of focus, an entire scene with Suzi's transvestite brother was shot at the wrong speed, so that he talks in a high, little, Minnie Mouse voice.

Zedd's favorite part of the movie is the last, the elevator death scene, because it was shot so economically and Hitchcock-slick, and the cutting is taut and seamless: pure suspense. This scene was, of course, a large, howling cockroach being slowly crushed to death between the elevator doors, first spurting, then blasting, whole geysers of sticky white foam from his deflating belly. His intended victim, Queen Death, whom he can not advance upon, being rather firmly restrained by the doors, has, in the meantime, collapsed and drowned under the foam.

As for the transgressions committed elsewhere in the film, there can be something wonderful about a camera coolly zooming into a close-up on the star, when suddenly, at mid-zoom, the cameraman realizes it's all out of focus, and just continues in like it was nobody's business but his own, and then, holds the out of focus shot as long as he possibly can.

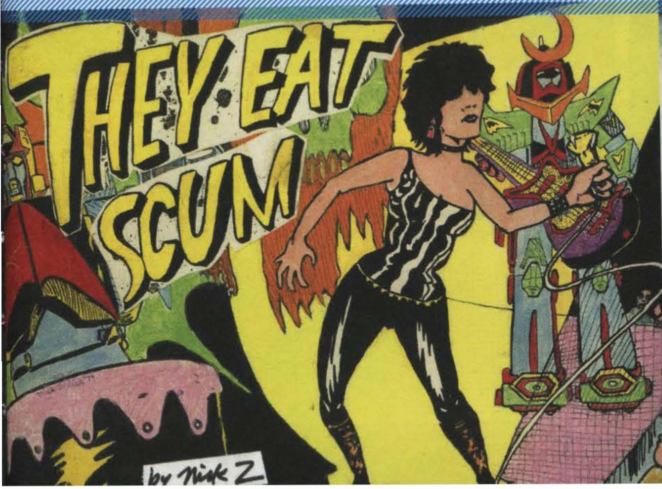
That's movie.

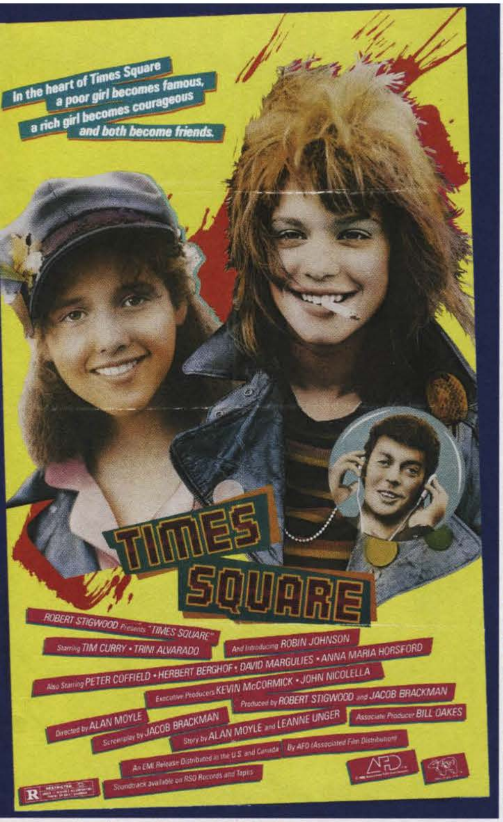
Mia Culpa

MPAA Rating: X
Running Time: 75 Minutes
Color
©19[illegible] Weirdo Films Ltd.

VHS
TVC 1082

Above: THEY EAT SCUM VHS cover art; Below left: THEY EAT SCUM poster art; Below right: Nick Zedd and friend

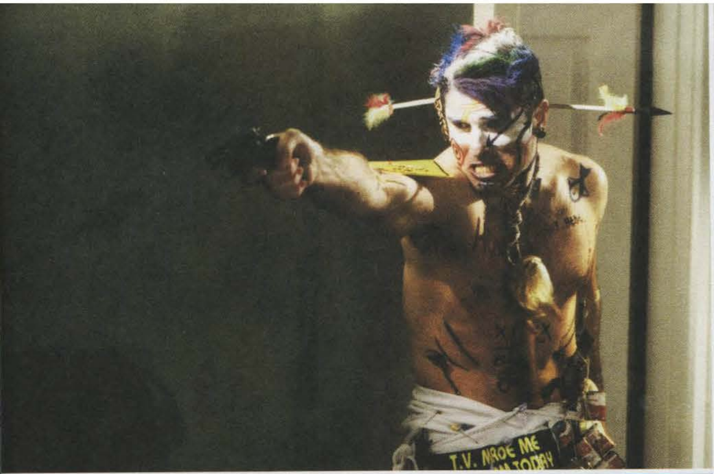


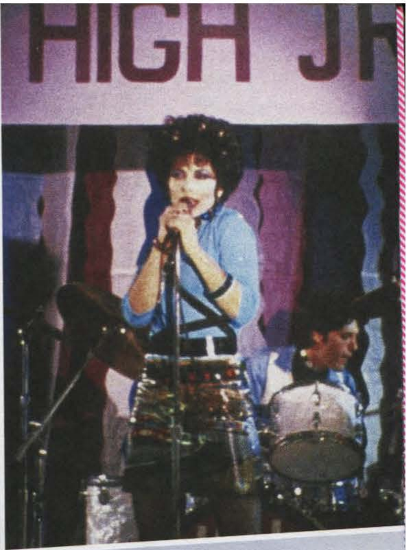

In the heart of Times Square
a poor girl becomes famous,
a rich girl becomes courageous
and both become friends.
TIMES SQUARE
ROBERT STIGWOOD Presents "TIMES SQUARE"
Starring TIM CURRY • TRINI ALVARADO
And Introducing ROBIN JOHNSON
Also Starring PETER COFFIELD • HERBERT BERGHOF • DAVID MARGULIES • ANNA MARIA HORSFORD
Executive Producers KEVIN McCORMICK • JOHN NICOLELLA
Produced by ROBERT STIGWOOD and JACOB BRACKMAN
Directed by ALAN MOYLE
Screenplay by JACOB BRACKMAN
Story by ALAN MOYLE and LEANNE UNGER
Associate Producer BILL OAKES
An EMI Release Distributed in the U.S. and Canada By AFD (Associated Film Distribution)
Soundtrack available on RSO Records and Tapes
R RESTRICTED
AFD

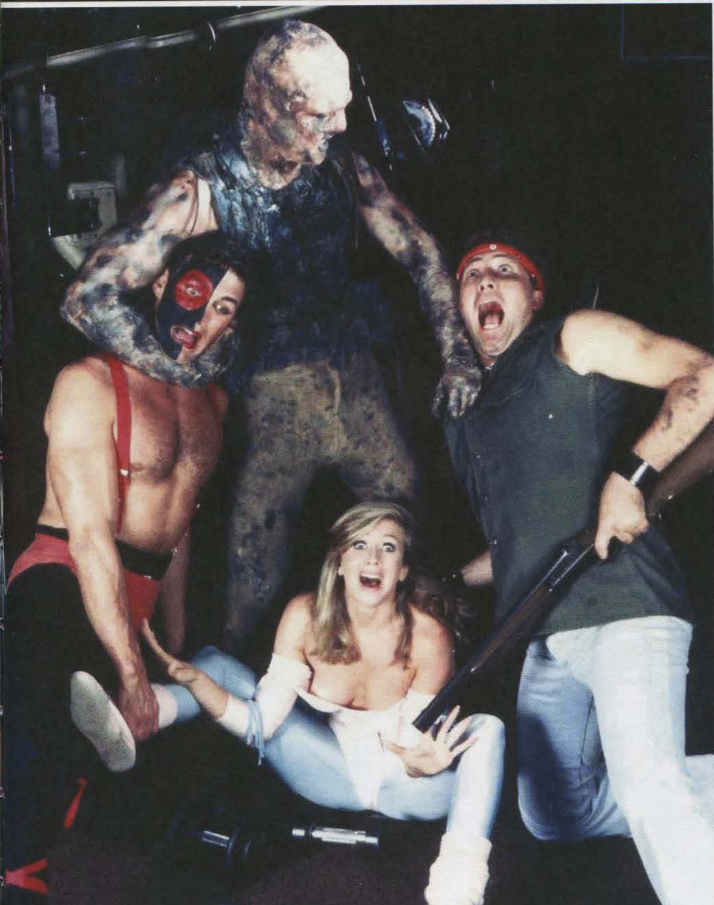
STICK IT IN YOUR EAR

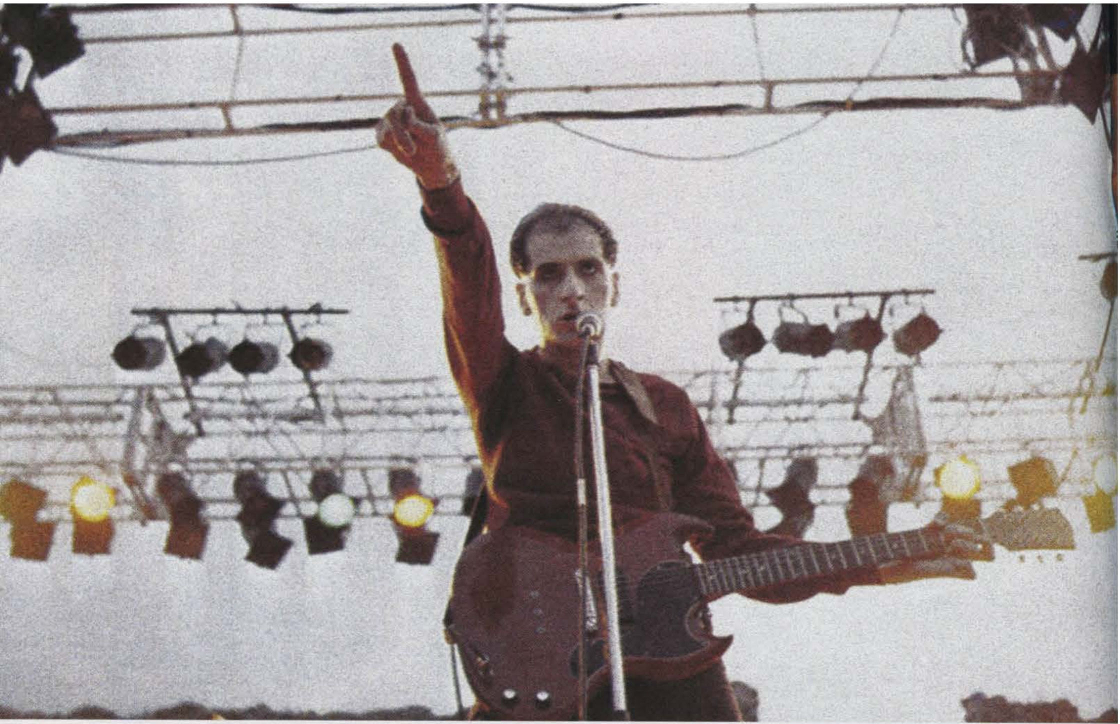
This page: TIMES SQUARE

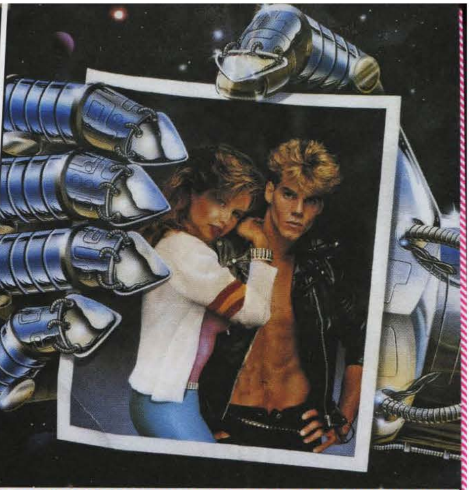
Opposite page, clockwise from top left: TRAXX; VALLEY GIRL; VALLEY GIRL poster art; THE TOXIC AVENGER


T.V. MADE ME
TODAY


HIGH JR





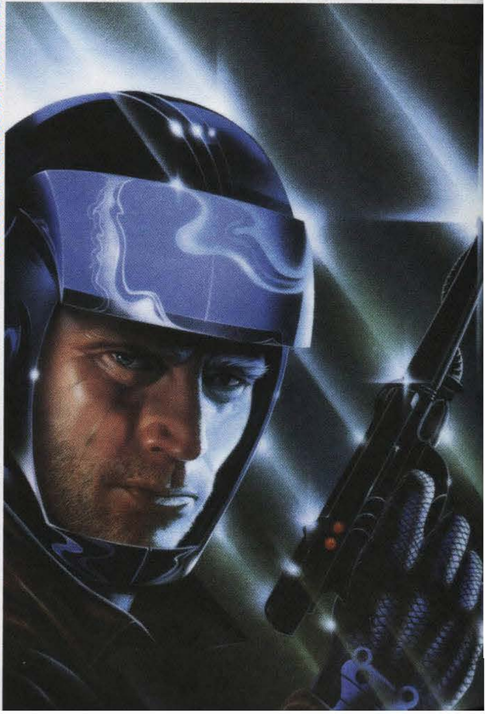


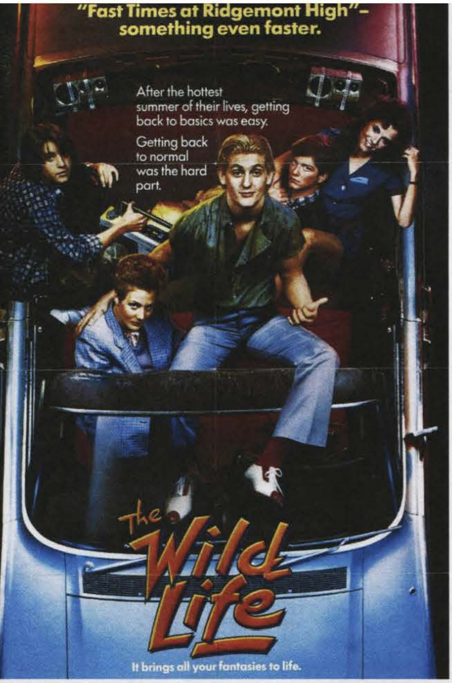
Opposite page, top to bottom: URGH! A MUSIC WAR; LA VENGANZA DE LOS PUNKS

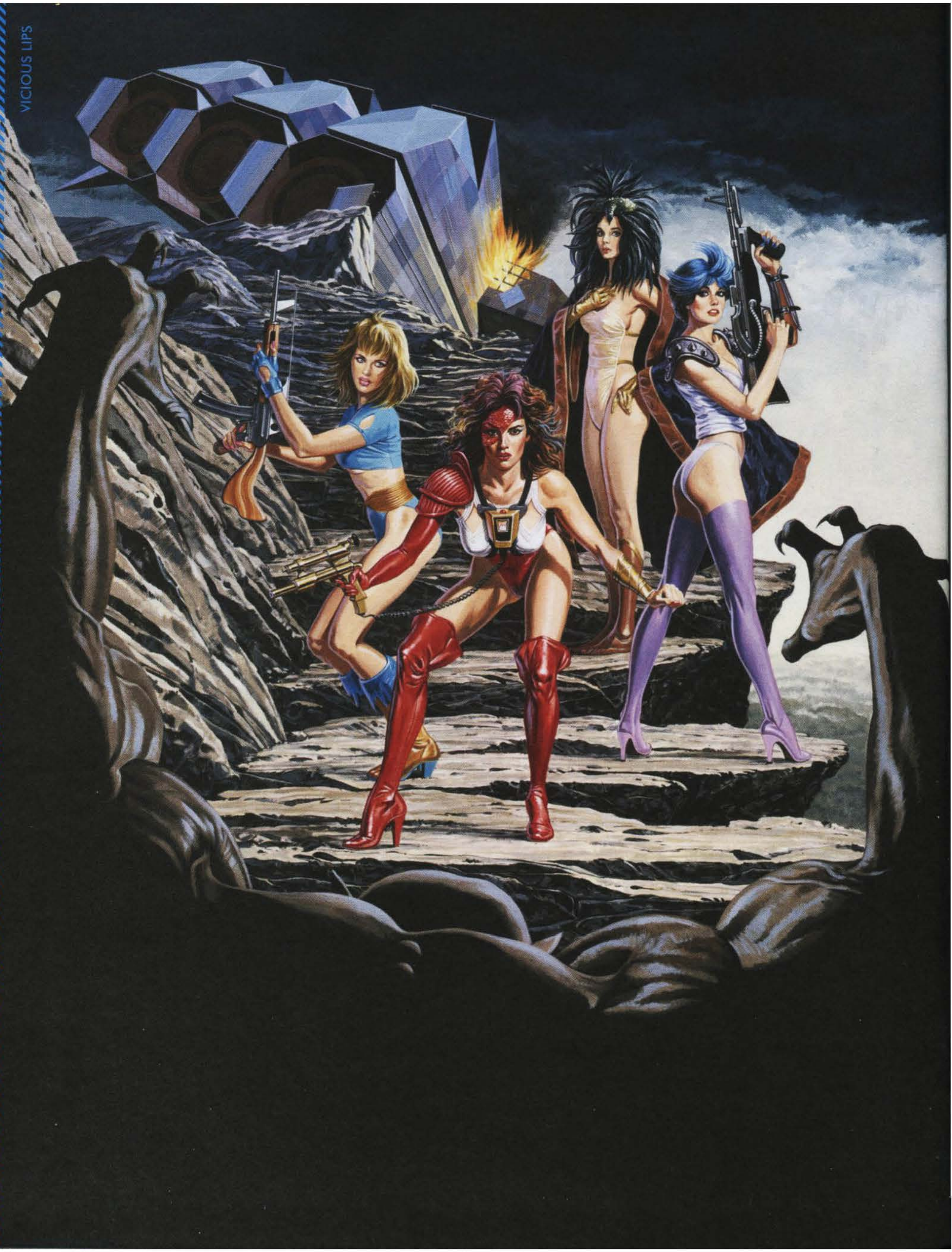
This page, clockwise from top left: THRASHIN'; VOYAGE OF THE ROCK ALIENS; VICIOUS LIPS; WARRIOR OF THE LOST WORLD

This page, clockwise from top: WILD THING; TRANCERS; WHISPER & SHOUT

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: THE WILD LIFE; WARRIOR OF THE LOST WORLD; THE WRAITH




"Fast Times at Ridgemont High"– something even faster.
After the hottest summer of their lives, getting back to basics was easy.
Getting back to normal was the hard part.
The Wild Life
It brings all your fantasies to life.



DESTROY ALL INDEXES!!!

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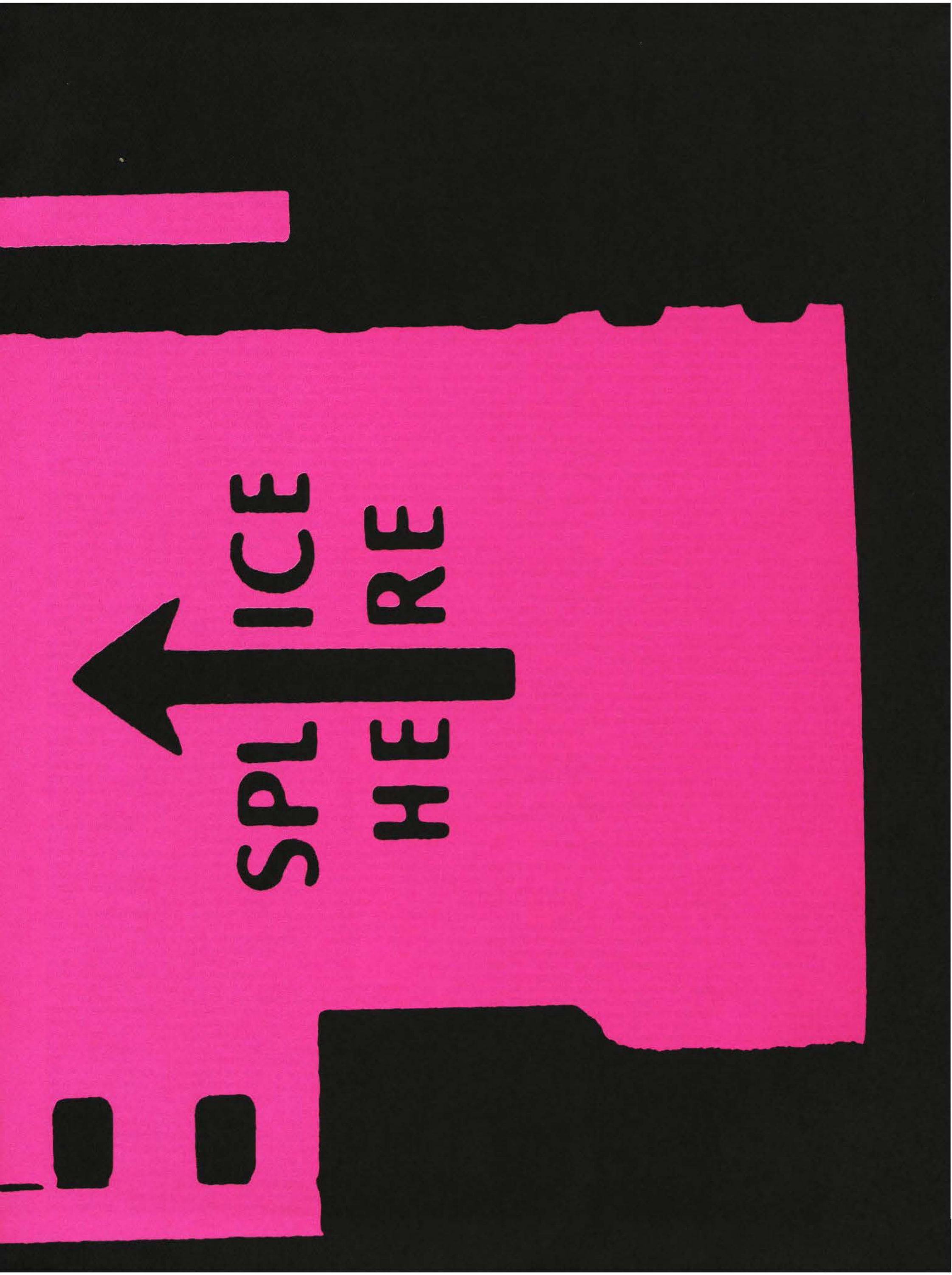
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